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# ESSAYS

BY

CHARLES LAMB

With Introduction and Notes



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## INTRODUCTION.

CHARLES LAMB was born in London, England, February 10, 1775, the youngest of seven children. John and Mary were senior to him by twelve and ten years respectively; of the other four nothing is known beyond the entry of their names in the baptismal register. His father, John Lamb, had come from Lincolnshire to seek a livelihood in London, and was for many years clerk to Samuel Salt, a lawyer of the Inner Temple. The first seven years of Charles' life were spent in the place of his birth, Crown Office Row, in the Temple. Here he and his sister Mary had access to the library of Mr. Salt, the source of their knowledge of and love for old English authors; the education which they thus gave themselves was supplemented by lessons from a local schoolmaster. At seven years of age, through the interest, perhaps, of Samuel Salt, Charles received a presentation to Christ's Hospital School. There he passed the next seven years, obtaining a good classical education, and forming life-lasting friendships with many, but with none more than with Samuel Taylor Coleridge, who influenced him much. Christ's Hospital scholarships at the Universities were limited to pupils about to take Holy Orders, for which Lamb was unfitted by an impediment in his speech, apart from the question of the poverty of his family, which naturally made him seek to earn something without delay. During the next three years, or some portion of them, he held a situation in the South Sea House, where his brother John had a good appointment, where there was also an Italian clerk called Elia, whose name was to be immortalized.

In 1792, through the influence of Samuel Salt, he was appointed to a clerkship in the accountants' office of the East India Company, beginning with a salary of £70 a year. In the India House he continued till 1825, when his salary had risen to about £700 a year, half of which was granted him as a pension.

In 1795 his father, old and infirm, retired from the service of Mr. Salt, and took lodgings in Little Queen Street, Holborn, where in the following year occurred the tragic death of Mrs. Lamb, stabbed by her daughter in a fit of insanity. The old

father survived but a few months; a sister of his who had formed one of the family died about the same time. Thus Charles and Mary, who had meantime recovered her reason, were left practically alone in the world; for their brother John held aloof, desiring that Mary should remain in the asylum. Charles had had an attack of insanity in the winter of 1795-6; it was, perhaps, in consequence of this, and the care of his sister, that he gave up the idea of marrying the Anna of his sonnets. He had no return of the madness, but Mary had frequent relapses, the approach of which she felt in time to enable her to retire to the lunatic asylum.

It was in 1796 that Lamb first appeared as an author, when four sonnets by him were published in a volume of Coleridge's poems.

Lamb's first attempt in prose, exclusive of letters, was the tale of *Rosamund Gray* (1798), incongruous and improbable, showing the author's weakness in narrative, but exhibiting the pathos, quaintness of description and appropriateness of quotation which form the excellence of the *Essays of Elia*. Of it Shelley wrote: "What a lovely thing is his *Rosamund Gray*! How much knowledge of the sweetest and deepest part of our nature is in it!" In the same year he wrote what is perhaps the best known of his poems, the first stanza of which he afterwards omitted—

"Where are they gone, the old familiar faces?  
I had a mother, but she died and left me—  
Died prematurely in a day of horrors—  
All, all are gone, the old familiar faces."

For the first seventeen years of the present century, Charles and Mary Lamb resided within the precincts of the Temple; first in Mitre Court Buildings, then in Inner Temple Lane. At the beginning of this period, Charles was employed as an occasional writer of trifles for newspapers, but he soon attempted more ambitious work.

*Rosamund Gray* had shown that he was defective in the qualities which a novelist and a dramatist alike must possess.

In 1806 Lamb succeeded in getting a farce accepted at Drury Lane. The following year was published the collection of *Tales from Shakespeare*, the comedies by Mary Lamb, the tragedies by Charles. This was for both a congenial task, and one for which,

from the special bent of their studies, they were thoroughly qualified.

With the exception of Shakespeare, the Elizabethan dramatists and without exception those of the following half century, were unknown to the public of eighty years ago. A rich literary mine was opened to them in Lamb's *Specimens of English Dramatic Poets contemporary with Shakespeare*; and the notes which he added placed him in the first rank of critics.

In 1817 the brother and sister left the Temple for the second time and took lodgings in great Russell Street, Covent Garden, and next year a collective edition of Lamb's works appeared in two volumes.

In January, 1820, appeared the first monthly part of *London Magazine*, though it numbered among its contributors the most eminent literary men of the day, it was never a pecuniary success, and in 1826 ceased to exist. For it Lamb wrote some forty-five essays, beginning in August, 1820, with the one entitled *The South Sea House*; this he signed with the pseudonym *Elia*, the name of the Italian already mentioned as engaged in the South Sea House, but of whom nothing further is known. This word, Lamb tells us, ought to be pronounced EL-ia. He continued to employ this *nom de plume*, and in 1823 a collection of the essays which had up to that time appeared, was published under the title of *Essays of Elia*.

Owing chiefly to the greater frequency of Mary Lamb's attacks they gave up housekeeping in 1829, and boarded at a house in the same neighborhood. In 1833 they made their last move to the house of Mr. and Mrs. Walden, at Edmonton, that Mary might be continually under their care.

Coleridge died the following year. "Coleridge is dead," Lamb kept repeating; and he survived his friend but a few months. A slight hurt on the face, caused by a fall, brought on an attack of erysipelas, and his life ended December 27, 1834. Mary survived until 1847.

Though, according to Leigh Hunt, "there never was a true portrait of Lamb," we have descriptions by Talfourd, Procter, Hood and others, which enable us to picture him in imagination: "A light frame, so fragile that it seemed as if a breath would overthrow it, clad in clerk-like black, was surmounted by a head of form and expression the most noble and sweet. His black hair

curled crisply about an expanded forehead; his eyes, softly brown, twinkled with varying expression, though the prevalent feeling was sad; and the nose slightly curved, and delicately carved at the nostril, with the lower outline of the face regularly oval, completed a head which was finely placed on the shoulders, and gave importance and even dignity to a diminutive and shadowy stem. Who shall describe his countenance, catch its quivering sweetness, and fix it for ever in words? There are none, alas, to answer the vain desire of friendship. Deep thought, striving with humor; the lines of suffering wreathed into cordial mirth; and a smile of painful sweetness, present an image to the mind it can as little describe as lose. His personal appearance and manner are not unfitly characterized by what he himself says in one of his letters to Manning, of Braham, 'a compound of the Jew, the gentleman, and the angel.'"

So Talfourd describes him; and all who knew him intimately note his gravity, sadness and sweetness. Lamb's natural shyness produced a false impression upon strangers, before whom he was either silent or gave utterance to ideas and sentiments quite untrue to his nature. In a Preface to the second series of the *Essays of Elia*, Lamb gives what purports to be a character of Elia. It is of himself that he really makes the following remarks:—

"My late friend was in many respects a singular character. Those who did not like him, hated him; and some, who once liked him, afterwards became his bitterest haters. The truth is, he gave himself too little concern what he uttered, and in whose presence. He observed neither time nor place, and would e'en out with what came uppermost. With the severe religionists he would pass for a free-thinker; while the other faction set him down for a bigot, or persuaded themselves that he belied his sentiments. Few understood him, and I am not certain that at all times he quite understood himself. He too much affected that dangerous figure—irony. He sowed doubtful speeches, and reaped plain, unequivocal hatred. He would interrupt the gravest discussion with some light jest; and yet, perhaps, not quite irrelevant in ears that could understand it. Your long and much talkers hated him. The informal habit of his mind, joined to an inveterate impediment of speech, forbade him to be an orator; and he seemed determined that no one else should play that part

when he was present. He was *petit* and ordinary in his person and appearance. I have seen him sometimes in what is called good company, but where he has been a stranger, sit silent and be suspected for an odd fellow; till some unlucky occasion provoking it, he would stutter out some senseless pun (not altogether senseless, perhaps, if rightly taken) which has stamped his character for the evening. It was hit or miss with him; but nine times out of ten he contrived by this device to send away a whole company his enemies. His conceptions rose kindlier than his utterance, and his happiest *impromptus* had the appearance of effort. He has been accused of trying to be witty, when in truth he was but struggling to give his poor thoughts articulation. He chose his companions for some individuality of character which they manifested. Hence not many persons of science, and few professed *literati*, were of his councils. They were, for the most part, persons of an uncertain fortune; and as to such people commonly nothing is more obnoxious than a gentleman of settled (though moderate) income, he passed with most of them for a great miser. To my knowledge this was a mistake. His *intimados*, to confess a truth, were in the world's eye a ragged regiment. He found them floating on the surface of society; and the color, or something else, in the weed pleased him. The burrs stuck to him; but they were good and loving burrs for all that. He never greatly cared for the society of what are called good people. If any of these were scandalized (and offenses were sure to arise) he could not help it. When he has been remonstrated with for not making more concessions to the feelings of good people, he would retort by asking what one point did these good people ever concede to him? He was temperate in his meals and diversions, but always kept a little on this side of abstemiousness. Only in the use of the Indian weed he might be thought a little excessive. He took it, he would say, as a solvent of speech. Marry—as the friendly vapor ascended, how his prattle would curl up sometimes with it! the ligaments which tongue-tied him were loosened, and the stammerer proceeded a statish!"

Lamb's generosity was great, even in the days of his pecuniary difficulties; and as his income increased he gave more and more liberally to all who needed help. Nor did he confine himself to giving money, but whenever he could be of use spared neither time nor trouble. He spent little on himself, and before he knew

that the directors of the India House would grant his sister a pension, he had laid by £2,000 for her.

Lamb's position in literature is a remarkable one. We have seen that he was not a dramatist; he could not, like Chaucer, Shakespeare, or such modern novelists as Thackeray and Dickens, throw himself into, and depict with truth, various characters. He could not construct a plot; he had no idea of unity of action. He was not, on the other hand, a subjective poet, like Byron and Shelley, whom he neither understood nor liked. He could not give utterance to great emotions, which were not in his nature. What he could do, and what he did to perfection in the *Essays of Elia*, was to seize on the salient features, good or bad, in individuals or in institutions, and show them to the world in that terse, expressive style which he imbibed in his earliest childhood from the old English pre-restoration authors, whose works he found in Mr. Salt's library. He must not be regarded as a plagiarist or as a mere echo of that literary period, but rather as a distinct and noteworthy genius of the same school. If Lamb uses their language, it is because he has made that language his own; if he quotes them, as he does so often, the very inaccuracy of his quotations proves how spontaneous they were.

His limitations as a critic are well put by Mr. Ainger: "Where his heart was, there his judgment was sound. Where he actively disliked, or was passively indifferent, his critical powers remained dormant. He was too fond of paradox, too much at the mercy of his emotions or the mood of the hour, to be a safe guide always. But where no disturbing forces interfered, he exercised a faculty almost unique in the history of criticism."

The *Essays of Elia* are in great part biographical; but so much does Lamb delight to mystify the reader, that he makes numerous fictitious statements, and when he records facts he hints that he is inventing. He delights to alter names and dates, and even to speak of the same person under different names in different essays. Were it not for outside information we should be at a loss to distinguish truth from fiction.

Not only ought the study of these selected Essays to lead to a more thorough investigation of the *Essays of Elia*, but Lamb ought to be regarded as an easy introduction to those authors who were his models and in whose works the English language arrived at maturity.

## CRITICAL OPINIONS

As his frame, so was his genius. It was as fit for thought as could be, and equally as unfit for action; and this rendered him melancholy, apprehensive, humorous, and willing to make the best of everything as it was, both from tenderness of heart and abhorrence of alteration. His understanding was too great to admit an absurdity, his frame was not strong enough to deliver it from a fear. His sensibility to strong contrasts was the foundation of his humor, which was that of a wit at once melancholy and willing to be pleased. He would beard a superstition and shudder at the old phantasm while he did it. One could have imagined him cracking a jest in the teeth of a ghost, and then melting into thin air himself out of a sympathy with the awful. His humor and his knowledge both, were those of Hamlet, of Molière, of Carlin, who shook a city with laughter, and, in order to divert his melancholy, was recommended to go and hear himself. Yet he extracted a real pleasure out of his jokes, because good-heartedness retains that privilege when it fails in everything else. I should say he condescended to be a punster if condescension had been a word befitting wisdom like his. Being told that somebody had lampooned him, he said, "Very well, I'll Lamb-pun him." His puns were admirable, and often contained as deep things as the wisdom of some who have greater names. . . . Willing to see society go on as it did, because he despaired of seeing it otherwise, but not at all agreeing in his interior with the common notions of crime and punishment, he "dumbfounded" a long tirade one evening by taking the pipe out of his mouth, and asking the speaker, "whether he meant to say that a thief was not a good man?"—*Autobiography of Leigh Hunt.*

There is a fine tone of chiaro-oscuro, a moral perspective, in his writings. He delights to dwell on that which is fresh to the eye of memory; he yearns after and covets what soothes the frailty of human nature. That touches him most nearly which is withdrawn to a certain distance, which verges on the borders of oblivion; that piques and provokes his fancy most which is hid from a superficial glance. That which, though gone by, is still remem-



bered, is in his view more genuine, and has given more "vital signs that it will live," than a thing of yesterday, that may be forgotten to-morrow. Death has in this sense the spirit of life in it, and the shadowy has to our author something substantial in it. Ideas savor most of reality in his mind; or rather his imagination loiters on the edge of each, and a page of his writings recalls to our fancy the stranger on the grate, fluttering in its dusky tenuity, with its idle superstition and hospitable welcome. . . . He disdains all the vulgar artifices of authorship, all the cant of criticism, and helps to notoriety. He has no grand swelling theories to attract the visionary and the enthusiast, no passing fancy to allure the thoughtless and the vain. He evades the present, he mocks the future. His affections revert to and settle on the past, but then even this must have something personal and local in it to interest him deeply and thoroughly; he pitches his tent in the suburbs of existing manners; brings down the account of character to the few straggling remains of the last generation; seldom ventures beyond the bills of mortality, and occupies that nice point between egotism and disinterested humanity.—*Hazlitt on Lamb in "The Spirit of the Age."*

The prose essays, under the signature of Elia, form the most delightful section amongst Lamb's works. They traverse a peculiar field of observation, sequestered from general interest; and they are composed in a spirit too delicate and unobtrusive to catch the ear of the noisy crowd clamoring for strong sensations. But this retiring delicacy itself, the pensiveness checkered by gleams of the fanciful and the humor that is touched with cross-lights of pathos, together with the picturesque quaintness of the objects casually described, whether men or things or usages, and in the rear of all this the constant recurrence to ancient recollections and to decaying forms of household life, as things retiring before the tumult of new and revolutionary generations—these traits in combination communicate to the papers a grace and strength of originality which nothing in any literature approaches, whether for degree or kind of excellence, except the most felicitous papers of Addison, such as those on Sir Roger de Coverley, and some others in the same vein of composition. They resemble Addison's papers also in the diction, which is natural and idiomatic



even to carelessness. They are equally faithful to the truth of nature; and in this only they differ remarkably—that the sketches of Elia reflect the stamp and impress of the writer's own character, whereas in all those of Addison the personal peculiarities of the delineator (though known to the reader from the beginning through the account of the club) are nearly quiescent.—“*Charles Lamb: Biographical Essay by Thomas De Quincey.*”

“Elia” is never verbose, yet never incomplete. You are not wearied because he says too much nor dissatisfied because he says too little. In this inimitable sense of proportion, this fitness of adjustment between thought and expression, the prose of “Elia” reminds us of the verse of Horace. Nor is the Essayist without some other resemblance to the Poet—in the amenity which accompanies his satire; in his sportive view of things grave, the grave morality he deduces from things sportive; his equal sympathy for rural and for town life; his constant good-fellowship, and his lenient philosophy. Here, indeed, all similitude ceases: the modern essayist advances no pretension to the ancient poet's wide survey of the social varieties of mankind; to his seizure of those large and catholic types of human nature which are familiarly recognizable in every polished community, every civilized time; still less to that intense sympathy in the life and movement of the world around him which renders the utterance of his individual emotion the vivid illustration of the character and history of his age. Yet “Elia” secures a charm of his own in the very narrowness of the range to which he limits his genius. For thus the interest he creates becomes more intimate and household.—*Bulwer Lytton on “Charles Lamb and some of his Companions.”*

Small and spare in person, and with small legs (“inmaterial legs,” Hood called them), he had a dark complexion; dark, curling hair, almost black; and a grave look, lightening up occasionally and capable of sudden merriment. His laugh was seldom excited by jokes merely ludicrous; it was never spiteful; and his quiet smile was sometimes inexpressibly sweet—perhaps it had a touch of sadness in it. His mouth was well shaped; his lip tremulous with expression; his brown eyes were quick, restless, and glittering; and he had a grand head, full of thought. Leigh Hunt said

that "he had a head worthy of Aristotle." Hazlitt calls it "a fine Titian head, full of dumb eloquence." Although sometimes strange in manner, he was thoroughly unaffected; in serious matters thoroughly sincere. He was, indeed (as he confesses), terribly shy; diffident, not awkward in manner; with occasionally nervous twitching motions that betrayed this infirmity. He dreaded the criticisms of servants far more than the observations of their masters. To undergo the scrutiny of the first, as he said to me when we were going to breakfast with Mr. Rogers one morning, was "terrible." His speech was brief and pithy; not too often humorous, never sententious nor didactic. . . . It was curious to observe the gradations in Lamb's manner to his various guests, although it was courteous to all. With Hazlitt he talked as though they met the subject in discussion on equal terms. With Leigh Hunt he exchanged repartees; to Wordsworth he was almost respectful; with Coleridge he was sometimes jocose, sometimes deferring.—*From "Charles Lamb: a Memoir," by Barry Cornwall.*

## CHRONOLOGY

1775. Born in Crown Office Row, in the Temple.
- 1782-9. At Christ's Hospital; subsequently becomes clerk in the South Sea House.
1792. Obtains clerkship in the India House.
1796. Contributes some poems to a volume issued by Coleridge at Bristol.
- Death of his mother by the hand of his sister Mary in a fit of insanity. After a short confinement Mary recovers, but is all her life subject to recurrences of the malady, when she has to leave her home for an asylum.
1797. Second edition of poems by S. T. Coleridge, with poems by Charles Lamb and Charles Lloyd.
1798. Publishes the *Tale of Rosamund Gray*.
1799. Death of his father. From this time Charles and Mary live together in various lodgings, except when Mary has to be put under restraint. (For Mary Lamb see the *Essay Mackery End.*)
1802. Publishes *John Woodvil; a Tragedy*.
1806. Writes a farce, *Mr. H.*, which is put on the stage, but fails.

1807. Publishes *Tales from Shakespeare*, the joint work of himself and his sister; followed by the *The Adventures of Ulysses*.
1808. Edits *Specimens of English Dramatic Poets contemporary with Shakespeare*, with critical comments.
1818. Publishes "Works" containing poems and various critical essays; *e.g.*, on Hogarth, Wither, Shakespeare, with *Rosamund Gray*, the Dramatic Pieces, &c.
1820. Begins to write for the *London Magazine* over the signature "Elia."
1823. Publication of the First Series of the *Essays of Elia*. This year the brother and sister move out of London, and settle first at Islington, then at Enfield and Edmonton.
1825. Receives a pension from the Directors of the India House, and retires (see the Essay, *The Superannuated Man*).
1833. The *Last Essays of Elia* collected and published.
1834. July—Death of Coleridge.  
December—Death of Lamb.

"He leaves behind him, freed from griefs and years,  
Far worthier things than tears;  
The love of friends without a single foe:  
Unequalled lot below."

W. S. LANDOR, *To the Sister of Elia*.

## CHRIST'S HOSPITAL FIVE-AND-THIRTY YEARS AGO

I N Mr. Lamb's "Works," published a year or two since, I find a magnificent eulogy on my old school,\* such as it was, or now appears to him to have been, between the years 1782 and 1789. It happens, very oddly, that my own standing at Christ's was nearly corresponding with his; and, 5 with all gratitude to him for his enthusiasm for the cloisters, I think he has contrived to bring together whatever can be said in praise of them, dropping all the other side of the argument most ingeniously.

I remember L. at school; and can well recollect that he 10 had some peculiar advantages, which I and others of his schoolfellows had not. His friends lived in town, and were near at hand; and he had the privilege of going to see them, almost as often as he wished, through some invidious distinction, which was denied to us. The present worthy sub- 15 treasurer to the Inner Temple can explain how that happened. He had his tea and hot rolls in a morning, while we were battenning upon our quarter of a penny loaf—our *crug*—moistened with attenuated small beer, in wooden piggins, smacking of the pitched leathern jack it was poured from. 20 Our Monday's milk porritch, blue and tasteless, and the pease soup of Saturday, coarse and choking, were enriched for him with a slice of "extraordinary bread and butter," from the hot-loaf of the Temple. The Wednesday's mess of millet, somewhat less repugnant—(we had three banyan to 25 four meat days in the week)—was endeared to his palate with a lump of double-refined, and a smack of ginger (to make

\* Recollections of Christ's Hospital.

it go down the more glibly) or the fragrant cinnamon. In lieu of our *half-pickled* Sundays, or *quite fresh* boiled beef  
 30 on Thursdays (strong as *caro equina*), with detestable marigolds floating in the pail to poison the broth—our scanty mutton scraggs on Fridays—and rather more savoury, but grudging, portions of the same flesh, rotten-roasted or rare, on the Tuesdays (the only dish which excited our appetites,  
 35 and disappointed our stomachs in almost equal proportion) —he had his hot plate of roast veal, or the more tempting griskin (exotics unknown to our palates), cooked in the paternal kitchen (a great thing), and brought him daily by his maid or aunt! I remember the good old relative (in  
 40 whom love forbade pride) squatting down upon some odd stone in a by-nook of the cloisters, disclosing the viands (of higher regale than those cates which the ravens ministered to the Tishbite); and the contending passions of L. at the unfolding. There was love for the bringer; shame for the  
 45 thing brought, and the manner of its bringing; sympathy for those who were too many to share in it; and, at top of all, hunger (eldest, strongest of the passions!) predominant, breaking down the stony fences of shame, and awkwardness, and a troubling over-consciousness.

50 I was a poor friendless boy. My parents, and those who should care for me, were far away. Those few acquaintances of theirs, which they could reckon upon being kind to me in the great city, after a little forced notice, which they had the grace to take of me on my first arrival in town, soon  
 55 grew tired of my holiday visits. They seemed to them to recur too often, though I thought them few enough; and, one after another, they all failed me, and I felt myself alone among six hundred playmates.

O the cruelty of separating a poor lad from his early  
 60 homestead! The yearnings which I used to have towards it in those unfledged years! How, in my dreams, would my native town (far in the west) come back, with its church, and trees, and faces! How I would wake weeping, and in the anguish of my heart exclaim upon sweet Calne in  
 65 Wiltshire!

To this late hour of my life, I trace impressions left by the recollection of those friendless holidays. The long warm days of summer never return but they bring with them a gloom from the haunting memory of those *whole-day leaves*, when, by some strange arrangement, we were turned out, for 70 the live-long day, upon our own hands, whether we had friends to go to, or none. I remember those bathing-excursions to the New-River, which L. recalls with such relish, better, I think, than he can—for he was a home-seeking lad, and did not much care for such water-pastimes :—How merrily we 75 would sally forth into the fields ; and strip under the first warmth of the sun ; and wanton like young dace in the streams ; getting us appetites for noon, which those of us that were penniless (our scanty morning crust long since exhausted) had not the means of allaying—while the cattle, 80 and the birds, and the fishes, were at feed about us and we had nothing to satisfy our cravings—the very beauty of the day, and the exercise of the pastime, and the sense of liberty, setting a keener edge upon them!—How faint and languid, finally, we would return, towards night-fall, to our desired 85 morsel, half-rejoicing, half-reluctant, that the hours of our uneasy liberty had expired !

It was worse in the days of winter, to go prowling about the streets objectless—shivering at cold windows of print-shops, to extract a little amusement ; or haply, as a last 90 resort, in the hopes of a little novelty, to pay a fifty-times repeated visit (where our individual faces should be as well-known to the warden as those of his own charges) to the Lions in the Tower—to whose levee, by courtesy immemorial, we had a prescriptive title to admission. 95

L.'s governor (so we called the patron who presented us to the foundation) lived in a manner under his paternal roof. Any complaint which he had to make was sure of being attended to. This was understood at Christ's, and was an effectual screen to him against the severity of masters, or 100 worse tyranny of the monitors. The oppressions of these young brutes are heart-sickening to call to recollection. I have been called out of my bed, and *waked for the purpose*, in the

coldest winter nights—and this not once, but night after  
 105 night—in my shirt, to receive the discipline of a leathern  
 thong, with eleven other sufferers, because it pleased my  
 callow overseer, when there has been any talking heard after  
 we were gone to bed, to make the six last beds in the dor-  
 mitory, where the youngest children of us slept, answerable  
 110 for an offence they neither dared to commit, nor had the  
 power to hinder. The same execrable tyranny drove the  
 younger part of us from the fires, when our feet were perish-  
 ing with snow; and, under the cruellest penalties, forbade  
 the indulgence of a drink of water, when we lay in sleepless  
 115 summer nights, fevered with the season, and the day's sports.

There was one H——, who, I learned, in after days, was  
 seen expiating some maturer offence in the hulks. (Do I  
 flatter myself in fancying that this might be the planter of  
 that name who suffered—at Nevis, I think, or St. Kitts—  
 120 some few years since? My friend Tobin was the benevolent  
 instrument of bringing him to the gallows.) This petty Nero  
 actually branded a boy, who had offended him, with a red-  
 hot iron; and nearly starved forty of us, with exacting con-  
 tributions, to the one half of our bread, to pamper a young  
 125 ass, which, incredible as it may seem, with the connivance  
 of the nurse's daughter (a young flame of his) he had con-  
 trived to smuggle in, and keep upon the leads of the *ward*, as  
 they called our dormitories. This game went on for better  
 than a week, till the foolish beast, not able to fare well but  
 130 he must cry roast meat—happier than Caligula's minion,  
 could he have kept his own counsel—but, foolisher, alas!  
 than any of his species in the fables—waxing fat, and kick-  
 ing, in the fulness of bread, one unlucky minute would  
 needs proclaim his good fortune to the world below; and,  
 135 laying out his simple throat, blew such a ram's-horn blast, as  
 (toppling down the walls of his own Jericho) set concealment  
 any longer at defiance. The client was dismissed, with  
 certain attentions, to Smithfield; but I never understood  
 that the patron underwent any censure on the occasion.  
 140 This was in the stewardship of L.'s admired Perry.

Under the same *facile* administration, can L. have for-



gotten the cool impunity with which the nurses used to carry away openly, in open platters, for their own tables, one out of two of every hot joint, which the careful matron had been seeing scrupulously weighed out for our dinners? These 145 things were daily practised in that magnificent apartment, which L. (grown connoisseur since, we presume) praises so highly for the grand paintings "by Verrio, and others," with which it is "hung round and adorned." But the sight of sleek, well-fed blue-coat boys in pictures was, at that time, I 150 believe, little consolatory to him, or us, the living ones, who saw the better part of our provisions carried away before our faces by harpies; and ourselves reduced (with the Trojan in the hall of Dido)

To feed our mind with idle portraiture.

155

L. has recorded the repugnance of the school to *gags*, or the fat of fresh beef boiled; and sets it down to some superstition. But these unctuous morsels are never grateful to young palates (children are universally fat-haters), and in strong, coarse, boiled meats, *unsalted*, are detestable. A 160 *gag-eater* in our time was equivalent to a *goule*, and held in equal detestation. — suffered under the imputation:

—— "T was said  
He ate strange flesh.

He was observed, after dinner, carefully to gather up the 165 remnants left at his table (not many, nor very choice fragments you may credit me)—and, in an especial manner, these disreputable morsels, which he would convey away, and secretly stow in the settle that stood at his bedside. None saw when he ate them. It was rumoured that he 170 privately devoured them in the night. He was watched, but no traces of such midnight practices were discoverable. Some reported, that, on leave-days, he had been seen to carry out of the bounds a large blue check handkerchief, full of something. This then must be the accursed thing. Conjecture 175 next was at work to imagine how he could dispose of it. Some said he sold it to the beggars. This belief generally

prevailed. He went about moping. None spake to him. No one would play with him. He was excommunicated; 180 put out of the pale of the school. He was too powerful a boy to be beaten, but he underwent every mode of that negative punishment, which is more grievous than many stripes. Still he persevered. At length he was observed by two of his school-fellows, who were determined to get at the 185 secret, and had traced him one leave-day for that purpose, to enter a large worn-out building, such as there exist specimens of in Chancery Lane, which are let out to various scales of pauperism, with open door and a common staircase. After him they silently slunk in, and followed by stealth up four 190 flights, and saw him tap at a poor wicket, which was opened by an aged woman, meanly clad. Suspicion was now ripened into certainty. The informers had secured their victim. They had him in their toils. Accusation was formally preferred, and retribution most signal was looked for. Mr. 195 Hathaway, the then steward (for this happened a little after my time), with that patient sagacity which tempered all his conduct, determined to investigate the matter before he proceeded to sentence. The result was, that the supposed mendicants, the receivers or purchasers of the mysterious 200 scraps, turned out to be the parents of —, an honest couple come to decay—whom this seasonable supply had, in all probability, saved from mendicancy; and that this young stork, at the expense of his own good name, had all this while been only feeding the old birds!—The governors on 205 this occasion, much to their honour, voted a present relief to the family of —, and presented him with a silver medal. The lesson which the steward read upon RASH JUDGMENT, on the occasion of publicly delivering the medal to —, I believe would not be lost upon his auditory.—I had left 210 school then, but I well remember —. He was a tall, shambling youth, with a cast in his eye, not at all calculated to conciliate hostile prejudices. I have since seen him carrying a baker's basket. I think I heard he did not do quite so well by himself, as he had done by the old folks. 215 I was a hypochondriac lad; and the sight of a boy in

fetters, upon the day of my first putting on the blue clothes, was not exactly fitted to assuage the natural terrors of initiation. I was of tender years, barely turned of seven; and had only read of such things in books, or seen them but in dreams. I was told he had *run away*. This was the 220 punishment for the first offence.—As a novice I was soon after taken to see the dungeons. These were little, square, Bedlam cells, where a boy could just lie at his length upon straw and a blanket—a mattress, I think, was afterwards substituted—with a peep of light, let in askance, from a 225 a prison-orifice at top, barely enough to read by. Here the poor boy was locked in by himself all day, without sight of any but the porter who brought him his bread and water—who *might not speak to him*;—or of the beadle, who came twice a week to call him out to receive his periodical chastise- 230 ment, which was almost welcome, because it separated him for a brief interval from solitude:—and here he was shut up by himself *of nights* out of the reach of any sound, to suffer whatever horrors the weak nerves, and superstition incident to his time of life, might subject him to.\* This was the 235 penalty for the second offence. Wouldst thou like, reader, to see what became of him in the next degree?

The culprit, who had been a third time an offender, and whose expulsion was at this time deemed irreversible, was brought forth, as at some solemn *auto da fé*, arrayed in un- 240 eouth and most appalling attire—all trace of his late “watchet weeds” carefully effaced, he was exposed in a jacket resembling those which London lamplighters formerly delighted in, with a cap of the same. The effect of this divestiture was such as the ingenious devisers of it could 245 have anticipated. With his pale and frightened features, it was as if some of those disfigurements in Dante had seized

\* One or two instances of lunacy, or attempted suicide, accordingly, at length convinced the governors of the impolicy of this part of the sentence, and the midnight torture to the spirits was dispensed with.—This fancy of dungeons for children was a sprout of Howard's brain; for which (saving the reverence due to Holy Paul) methinks, I could willingly spit upon his statue.

upon him. In this disguise he was brought into the hall (*L.'s favourite state-room*), where awaited him the whole number of his school-fellows, whose joint lessons and sports he was thenceforth to share no more; the awful presence of the steward, to be seen for the last time; of the executioner beadle, clad in his state robe for the occasion; and of two faces more, of direr import, because never but in these extremities visible. These were governors; two of whom by choice, or charter, were always accustomed to officiate at these *Ultima Supplicia*; not to mitigate (so at least we understood it), but to enforce the uttermost stripe. Old Bamber Gascoigne, and Peter Aubert, I remember, were colleagues on one occasion, when the beadle turning rather pale, a glass of brandy was ordered to prepare him for the mysteries. The scourging was, after the old Roman fashion, long and stately. The licitor accompanied the criminal quite round the hall. We were generally too faint with attending to the previous disgusting circumstances, to make accurate report with our eyes of the degree of corporal suffering inflicted. Report, of course, gave out the back knotty and livid. After scourging, he was made over, in his *San Benito*, to his friends, if he had any (but commonly such poor run-agates were friendless), or to his parish officer, who, to enhance the effect of the scene, had his station allotted to him outside of the hall gate.

These solemn pageantries were not played off so often as to spoil the general mirth of the community. We had plenty of exercise and recreation *after* school hours; and, for myself, I must confess, that I was never happier than *in* them. The Upper and the Lower Grammar Schools were held in the same room; and an imaginary line only divided their bounds. Their character was as different as that of the inhabitants on the two sides of the Pyrenees. The Rev. James Boyer was the Upper Master; but the Rev. Matthew Field presided over that portion of the apartment of which I had the good fortune to be a member. We lived a life as careless as birds. We talked and did just what we pleased, and nobody molested us. We carried an accidence,

or a grammar, for form ; but, for any trouble it gave us, we might take two years in getting through the verbs deponent, and another two in forgetting all that we had learned about them. There was now and then the formality of saying a lesson, but if you had not learned it, a brush across the 290 shoulders (just enough to disturb a fly) was the sole remonstrance. Field never used the rod ; and in truth he wielded the cane with no great good-will—holding it “like a dancer.” It looked in his hands rather like an emblem than an instrument of authority ; and an emblem, too, he was 295 ashamed of. He was a good easy man, that did not care to ruffle his own peace, nor perhaps set any great consideration upon the value of juvenile time. He came among us, now and then, but often stayed away whole days from us ; and when he came it made no difference to us—he had his private 300 room to retire to, the short time he stayed, to be out of the sound of our noise. Our mirth and uproar went on. We had classics of our own, without being beholden to “insolent Greece or haughty Rome,” that passed current among us—Peter Wilkins—the Adventures of the Hon. Captain Robert 305 Boyle—the Fortunate Blue Coat Boy—and the like. Or we cultivated a turn for mechanic and scientific operations ; making little sun-dials of paper ; or weaving those ingenious parentheses called *cut-cradles* ; or making dry peas to dance upon the end of a tin pipe ; or studying the art military over 310 that laudable game “French and English,” and a hundred other such devices to pass away the time—mixing the useful with the agreeable—as would have made the souls of Rousseau and John Locke chuckle to have seen us.

Matthew Field belonged to that class of modest divines who 315 affect to mix in equal proportion the *gentleman*, the *scholar*, and the *Christian* ; but, I know not how, the first ingredient is generally found to be the predominating dose in the composition. He was engaged in gay parties, or with his courtly bow at some episcopal levee, when he should have been 320 attending upon us. He had for many years the classical charge of a hundred children, during the four or five first years of their education ; and his very highest form seldom

proceeded further than two or three of the introductory  
 325 fables of Phædrus. How things were suffered to go on  
 thus I cannot guess. Boyer, who was the proper person to  
 have remedied these abuses, always affected, perhaps felt, a  
 delicacy in interfering in a province not strictly his own. I  
 have not been without my suspicions, that he was not  
 330 altogether displeas'd at the contrast we presented to his end  
 of the school. We were a sort of Helots to his young  
 Spartans. He would sometimes, with ironic deference, send  
 to borrow a rod of the Under Master, and then, with  
 Sardonic grin, observe to one of his upper boys "how neat  
 335 and fresh the twigs looked." While his pale students were  
 battering their brains over Xenophon and Plato, with a  
 silence as deep as that enjoined by the Samite, we were en-  
 joying ourselves at our ease in our little Goshen. We saw a  
 little into the secrets of his discipline, and the prospect did  
 340 but the more reconcile us to our lot. His thunders rolled  
 innocuous for us; his storms came near, but never touched  
 us; contrary to Gideon's miracle, while all around were  
 drenched, our fleece was dry.\* His boys turned out the  
 better scholars; we, I suspect, have the advantage in temper.  
 345 His pupils cannot speak of him without something of terror  
 allaying their gratitude; the remembrance of Field comes  
 back with all the soothing images of indolence, and summer  
 slumbers, and work like play, and innocent idleness, and  
 Elysian exemptions, and life itself a "playing holiday."  
 350 Though sufficiently removed from the jurisdiction of  
 Boyer, we were near enough (as I have said) to understand  
 a little of his system. We occasionally heard sounds of  
 the *Utulantes*, and caught glances of Tartarus. B. was a  
 rabid pedant. His English style was cramp't to barbarism.  
 355 His Easter anthems (for his duty obliged him to those  
 periodical flights) were grating as scrannel pipes.†—He

\* Cowley.

† In this and everything B. was the antipodes of his coadjutor. While the former was digging his brains for crude anthems, worth a pig-nut, F. would be recreating his gentlemanly fancy in the more flowery walks of the Muses. A little dramatic effusion of his, under the name of Vertumnus and Pomona, is not yet forgotten by the

would laugh, ay, and heartily, but then it must be at Placcus's quibble about *Ree*—or at the *tristis severitas in ultu*, or *inspicere in patinas*, of Terence—thin jests, which at their first broaching could hardly have had *vis* enough to move a Roman muscle. He had two wigs, both pedantic, but of different omen. The one serene, smiling, fresh-powdered, betokening a mild day. The other, an old, discoloured, unkempt, angry caxon, denoting frequent and bloody execution. Woe to the school, when he made his morning appearance in his *passy* or *passionate wig*. No comet expounded surer. J. B. had a heavy hand. I have known him double his knotty fist at a poor trembling child (the maternal milk hardly dry upon its lips) with a “Sirrah, do you presume to set your wits at me?”—Nothing was more common than to see him make a headlong entry into the schoolroom, from his inner recess or library, and, with turbulent eye, singling out a lad roar out, “Od’s my life, sirrah!” (his favourite adjuration) “I have a great mind to whip you!”—then, with as sudden a retracting impulse, fling back into his lair—and, after a cooling lapse of some minutes (during which all but the culprit had totally forgotten the context), drive headlong out again, piecing out his imperfect sense, as if it had been some Devil’s Litany, with the expletory yell—“*and I WILL too.*”—In his gentler moods, when the *ravidus furor* was assuaged, he had resort to an ingenious method, peculiar, for what I have heard, to himself, of whipping the boy and reading the Debates at the same time; a paragraph and a lash between; which in those times, when parliamentary oratory was most at a height and flourishing in these realms, was not calculated to impress the patient with a veneration for the diffuser graces of rhetoric.

Once, and but once, the uplifted rod was known to fall ineffectual from his hand—when droll, squinting W., having been caught putting the inside of the master’s desk to a use

chroniclers of that sort of literature. It was accepted by Garrick, but the town did not give it their sanction.—B. used to say of it, in a way of half-compliment, half-irony, that it was *too classical for representation.*



for which the architect had clearly not designed it, to justify himself, with great simplicity averred, that *he did not know that the thing had been forewarned*. This exquisite irrecognition of any law antecedent to the *oral* or *declaratory*, struck  
 395 so irresistibly upon the fancy of all who heard it (the pedagogue himself not excepted), that remission was unavoidable.

L. has given credit to B.'s great merits as an instructor. Coleridge, in his literary life, has pronounced a more intelligible and ample encomium on them. The author of the  
 400 "Country Spectator" doubts not to compare him with the ablest teachers of antiquity. Perhaps we cannot dismiss him better than with the pious ejaculation of C.—when he heard that his old master was on his deathbed: "Poor  
 405 J. B. !—may all his faults be forgiven ; and may he be wafted to bliss by little cherub boys all head and wings, with no *bottoms* to reproach his sublunary infirmities."

Under him were many good and sound scholars bred.—First Grecian of my time was Lancelot Pepys Stevens,  
 410 kindest of boys and men, since Co-grammar-master (and inseparable companion) with Dr. T——e. What an edifying spectacle did this brace of friends present to those who remembered the antisocialities of their predecessors !—You never met the one by chance in the street without a wonder,  
 415 which was quickly dissipated by the almost immediate sub-appearance of the other. Generally arm-in-arm, these kindly coadjutors lightened for each other the toilsome duties of their profession, and when, in advanced age, one found it convenient to retire, the other was not long in dis-  
 420 covering that it suited him to lay down the fasces also. Oh, it is pleasant, as it is rare, to find the same arm linked in yours at forty, which at thirteen helped it to turn over the *Cicero De Amicitia*, or some tale of Antique Friendship, which the young heart even then was burning to anticipate !  
 425 —Co-Grecian with S. was Th——, who has since executed with ability various diplomatic functions at the Northern courts. Th—— was a tall, dark, saturnine youth, sparing of speech, with raven locks.—Thomas Fanshaw Middleton



followed him (now Bishop of Calcutta), a scholar and a gentleman in his teens. He has the reputation of an excellent critic; and is author (besides the "Country Spectator") of a Treatise on the Greek Article, against Sharpe. M. is said to bear his mitre high in India, where the *regni novitas* (I dare say) sufficiently justifies the bearing. A humility quite as primitive as that of Jewel or Hooker might not be exactly fitted to impress the minds of those Anglo-Asiatic diocesans with a reverence for home institutions, and the church which those fathers watered. The manners of M. at school, though firm, were mild and unassuming.—Next to M. (if not senior to him) was Richards, author of the *Aboriginal Britons*, the most spirited of the Oxford Prize Poems; a pale studious Grecian.—Then followed poor S——, ill-fated M——! of these the Muse is silent.

Finding some of Edward's race  
Unhappy, pass their annals by.

445

Come back into memory, like as thou wert in the day-spring of thy fancies, with hope like a fiery column before thee—the dark pillar not yet turned—Samuel Taylor Coleridge—Logician, Metaphysician, Bard!—How have I seen the casual passer through the Cloisters stand still, entranced with admiration (while he weighed the disproportion between the *speech* and the *garb* of the young *Mirandola*), to hear thee unfold, in thy deep and sweet intonations, the mysteries of *Jamblichus*, or *Plotinus* (for even in those years thou waxedst not pale at such philosophic draughts), or reciting *Homer* in his Greek, or *Pindar*—while the walls of the old Grey Friars re-echoed to the accents of the *inspired charity boy*!—Many were the "wit-combats" (to dally awhile with the words of old Fuller), between him and C. V. Le G——, "which two I behold like a Spanish great galleon, and an English man-of-war; Master Coleridge, like the former, was built far higher in learning, solid, but slow in his performances. C. V. L., with the English man-of-war lesser in bulk, but lighter in sailing, could turn with all tides,

465

tack about, and take advantage of all winds, by the quickness of his wit and invention."

Nor shalt thou, their compeer, be quickly forgotten, Allen, with the cordial smile, and still more cordial laugh, with  
 470 which thou wert wont to make the old Cloisters shake, in thy cognition of some poignant jest of theirs; or the anticipation of some more material, and, peradventure, practical one of thine own. Extinct are those smiles, with that beautiful countenance, with which (for thou wert the *Nireus*  
 475 *formosus* of the school), in the days of thy maturer waggery, thou didst disarm the wrath of infuriated town-damsel, who, incensed by provoking pinch, turning tigress-like round, suddenly converted by thy angel-look, exchanged the half-formed terrible "*bl*—," for a gentler greeting—" *bless thy*  
 480 *handsome face!* "

Next follow two, who ought to be now alive, and the friends of Elia—the junior Le G—— and F——; who impelled, the former by a roving temper, the latter by too quick a sense of neglect—ill capable of enduring the slights  
 485 poor Sizars are sometimes subject to in our seats of learning—exchanged their Alma Mater for the camp; perishing, one by climate, and one on the plains of Salamanca; Le G——, sanguine, volatile, sweet-natured; F——, dogged, faithful, anticipative of insult, warm-hearted, with something of the  
 490 old Roman height about him.

Fine, frank-hearted Fr——, the present master of Hertford, with Marmaduke T——, mildest of Missionaries—and both my good friends still—close the catalogue of Grecians in my time.

## MY RELATIONS

I AM arrived at that point of life at which a man may account it a blessing, as it is a singularity, if he have either of his parents surviving. I have not that felicity—and sometimes think feelingly of a passage in Browne's *Christian Morals*, where he speaks of a man that hath lived 5 sixty or seventy years in the world. "In such a compass of time," he says, "a man may have a close apprehension what it is to be forgotten, when he hath lived to find none who could remember his father, or scarcely the friends of his youth, and may sensibly see with what a face in no long 10 time OBLIVION will look upon himself."

I had an aunt, a dear and good one. She was one whom single blessedness had soured to the world. She often used to say, that I was the only thing in it which she loved; and, when she thought I was quitting it, she grieved over me 15 with mother's tears. A partiality quite so exclusive my reason cannot altogether approve. She was from morning till night poring over good books and devotional exercises. Her favourite volumes were Thomas à Kempis, in Stanhope's translation; and a Roman Catholic Prayer 20 Book, with the *matins* and *complines* regularly set down—terms which I was at that time too young to understand. She persisted in reading them, although admonished daily concerning their Papistical tendency; and went to church every Sabbath as a good Protestant should do. These were 25 the only books she studied; though I think at one period of her life, she told me, she had read with great satisfaction the *Adventures of an Unfortunate Young Nobleman*. Finding the door of the chapel in Essex Street open one

30 day—it was in the infancy of that heresy—she went in, liked the sermon, and the manner of worship, and frequented it at intervals for some time after. She came not for doctrinal points, and never missed them. With some little asperities in her constitution, which I have above  
35 hinted at, she was a steadfast, friendly being, and a fine *old Christian*. She was a woman of strong sense, and a shrewd mind—extraordinary at a *repartee*; one of the few occasions of her breaking silence—else she did not much value wit. The only secular employment I remember to have seen her  
40 engaged in, was the splitting of French beans, and dropping them into a china basin of fair water. The odour of those tender vegetables to this day comes back upon my sense, redolent of soothing recollections. Certainly it is the most delicate of culinary operations.

45 Male aunts, as somebody calls them, I had none—to remember. By the uncle's side I may be said to have been born an orphan. Brother or sister, I never had any—to know them. A sister, I think, that should have been Elizabeth, died in both our infancies. What a comfort, or  
50 what a care, may I not have missed in her?—But I have cousins sprinkled about in Hertfordshire—besides *two*, with whom I have been all my life in habits of the closest intimacy, and whom I may term cousins *par excellence*. These are James and Bridget Elia. They are older than  
55 myself by twelve, and ten, years; and neither of them seems disposed, in matters of advice and guidance, to waive any of the prerogatives which primogeniture confers. May they continue still in the same mind; and when they shall be seventy-five, and seventy-three, years old (I cannot spare  
60 them sooner), persist in treating me in my grand climacteric precisely as a stripling or younger brother.

James is an inexplicable cousin. Nature hath her unities, which not every critic can penetrate; or, if we feel, we cannot explain them. The pen of Yorick, and of none since  
65 his, could have drawn J. E. entire—those fine Shandean lights and shades, which make up his story. I must limp after in my poor antithetical manner, as the fates have given

ne grace and talent. J. E. then—to the eye of a common observer at least—seemeth made up of contradictory principles. The genuine child of impulse, the frigid philosopher of prudence—the phlegm of my cousin's doctrine is invariably at war with his temperament, which is high sanguine. With always some fire-new project in his brain, J. E. is the systematic opponent of innovation, and fiercer down of everything that has not stood the test of age and experiment. With a hundred fine notions chasing one another hourly in his fancy, he is startled at the least approach to the romantic in others; and, determined by his own sense in everything, commends *you* to the guidance of common sense on all occasions.—With a touch of the eccentric in all which he does, or says, he is only anxious that *you* should not commit yourself by doing anything absurd or singular. On my once letting slip at table, that I was not fond of a certain popular dish, he begged me at any rate not to *say* so—for the world would think me mad. He disguises a passionate fondness for works of high art (whereof he hath amassed a choice collection), under the pretext of buying only to sell again—that his enthusiasm may give no encouragement to yours. Yet, if it were so, why does that piece of tender, pastoral Domenichino hang still by his wall?—is the ball of his sight much more dear to him?—or what picture-dealer can talk like him?

Whereas mankind in general are observed to warp their speculative conclusions to the bent of their individual humours, *his* theories are sure to be in diametrical opposition to his constitution. He is courageous as Charles of Sweden, upon instinct; chary of his person upon principle, as a travelling Quaker.—He has been preaching up to me, all my life, the doctrine of bowing to the great—the necessity of forms, and manner, to a man's getting on in the world. He himself never aims at either, that I can discover,—and has a spirit, that would stand upright in the presence of the Cham of Tartary. It is pleasant to hear him discourse of patience—extolling it as the truest wisdom—and to see him during the last seven minutes that his dinner is getting ready.

Nature never ran up in her haste a more restless piece of workmanship than when she moulded this impetuous cousin—and Art never turned out a more elaborate orator than he can display himself to be, upon this favourite topic of the advantages of quiet and contentedness in the state, whatever it be, that we are placed in. He is triumphant on this theme, when he has you safe in one of those short stages that ply for the western road, in a very obstructing manner, at the foot of John Murray's street—where you get in  
 110 when it is empty, and are expected to wait till the vehicle hath completed her just freight—a trying three quarters of an hour to some people. He wonders at your fidgetiness,—“where could we be better than we are, *thus sitting, thus consulting?*”—“prefers, for his part, a state of rest to locomotion,”—with an eye all the while upon the coachman,—  
 115 till at length, waxing out of all patience at *your want of it*, he breaks out into a pathetic remonstrance at the fellow for detaining us so long over the time which he had professed, and declares peremptorily, that “the gentleman in the  
 125 coach is determined to get out, if he does not drive on that instant.”

Very quick at inventing an argument, or detecting a sophistry, he is incapable of attending *you* in any chain of arguing. Indeed he makes wild work with logic; and  
 130 seems to jump at most admirable conclusions by some process, not at all akin to it. Consonantly enough to this, he hath been heard to deny, upon certain occasions, that there exists such a faculty at all in man as *reason*; and wondereth how man came first to have a conceit of it—enforcing his negation  
 135 with all the might of *reasoning* he is master of. He has some speculative notions against laughter, and will maintain that laughing is not natural to *him*—when peradventure the next moment his lungs shall crow like chanticleer. He says some of the best things in the world—and declareth that  
 140 wit is his aversion. It was he who said, upon seeing the Eton boys at play in their grounds—*What a pity to think, that these fine ingenuous lads in a few years will all be changed into frivolous Members of Parliament!*

His youth was fiery, glowing, tempestuous—and in age he discovereth no symptom of cooling. This is that which I 145  
admire in him. I hate people who meet Time half-way. I  
am for no compromise with that inevitable spoiler. While  
he lives, J. E. will take his swing. It does me good, as I  
walk towards the street of my daily avocation, on some fine  
May morning, to meet him marching in a quite opposite 150  
direction, with a jolly handsome presence, and shining  
anguine face, that indicates some purchase in his eye—a  
Claude—or a Hobbima—for much of his enviable leisure is  
consumed at Christie's and Phillips's—or where not, to pick  
up pictures, and such gauds. On these occasions he mostly 155  
toppeth me, to read a short lecture on the advantage a  
person like me possesses above himself, in having his time  
occupied with business which he *must* do—assureth me that  
he often feels it hang heavy on his hands—wishes he had  
fewer holidays—and goes off—Westward Ho!—chanting a 160  
tune, to Pall Mall—perfectly convinced that he has convinced  
me—while I proceed in my opposite direction tuneless.

It is pleasant again to see this Professor of Indifference  
boasting the honours of his new purchase, when he has fairly  
purchased it. You must view it in every light, till *he* has 165  
found the best—placing it at this distance, and at that, but  
always suiting the focus of your sight to his own. You  
must spy at it through your fingers, to catch the aerial per-  
spective—though you assure him that to you the landscape  
shows much more agreeable without that artifice. Woe be 170  
to the luckless wight, who does not only not respond to his  
capture, but who should drop an unseasonable intimation of  
preferring one of his anterior bargains to the present!—The  
past is always his best hit—his “Cynthia of the minute.”—  
Alas! how many a mild Madonna have I known to *come in* 175  
—a Raphael!—keep its ascendancy for a few brief moons—  
then, after certain intermedial degradations, from the front  
drawing-room to the back gallery, thence to the dark parlour,  
—adopted in turn by each of the Carracci, under successive  
lowering ascriptions of filiation, mildly breaking its fall— 180  
consigned to the oblivious lumber-room, *go out* at last a

Lucca Giordano, or plain Carlo Maratti!—which things when I beheld—musing upon the chances and mutabilities of fate below, hath made me to reflect upon the altered  
 185 condition of great personages, or that woeful Queen of Richard the Second—

— set forth in pomp,  
 She came adorned hither like sweet May.  
 Sent back like Hallowmass or shortest day.

190 With great love for *you*, J. E. hath but a limited sympathy with what you feel or do. He lives in a world of his own, and makes slender guesses at what passes in your mind. He never pierces the marrow of your habits. He will tell an old established playgoer, that Mr. Such-a-one, of  
 195 So-and-so (naming one of the theatres), is a very lively comedian—as a piece of news! He advertised me but the other day of some pleasant green lanes which he had found out for me, *knowing me to be a great walker*, in my own immediate vicinity—who have haunted the identical spot  
 200 any time these twenty years!—He has not much respect for that class of feelings which goes by the name of sentimental. He applies the definition of real evil to bodily sufferings exclusively—and rejecteth all others as imaginary. He is affected by the sight, or the bare supposition, of a creature in  
 205 pain, to a degree which I have never witnessed out of woman-kind. A constitutional acuteness to this class of sufferings may in part account for this. The animal tribe in particular he taketh under his especial protection. A broken-winded or spur-galled horse is sure to find an advocate in him. An  
 210 over-loaded ass is his client for ever. He is the apostle to the brute kind—the never-failing friend of those who have none to care for them. The contemplation of a lobster boiled, or eels skinned *alive*, will wring him so, that “all for pity he could die.” It will take the savour from his palate,  
 215 and the rest from his pillow, for days and nights. With the intense feeling of Thomas Clarkson, he wanted only the steadiness of pursuit, and unity of purpose, of that “true yoke-fellow with Time,” to have effected as much for the



*Animal*, as he hath done for the *Negro Creation*. But my uncontrollable cousin is but imperfectly formed for purposes 220 which demand co-operation. He cannot wait. His amelioration plans must be ripened in a day. For this reason he has cut but an equivocal figure in benevolent societies, and combinations for the alleviation of human sufferings. His zeal constantly makes him to outrun, and put out, his coadjutors. 225 He thinks of relieving,—while they think of debating. He was black-balled out of a society for the Relief of —, because the fervour of his humanity toiled beyond the formal apprehension, and creeping processes, of his associates. I shall always consider this distinction as a patent of 230 nobility in the Elia family!

Do I mention these seeming inconsistencies to smile at, or upbraid, my unique cousin? Marry, heaven, and all good manners, and the understanding that should be between kinsfolk, forbid!—With all the strangenesses of this *strangest* 235 *of the Elias*—I would not have him in one jot or tittle other than he is; neither would I barter or exchange my wild kinsman for the most exact, regular, and every way consistent kinsman breathing.

In my next, reader, I may perhaps give you some account 240 of my cousin Bridget—if you are not already surfeited with cousins—and take you by the hand, if you are willing to go with us, on an excursion which we made a summer or two since, in search of *more cousins*—

Through the green plains of pleasant Hertfordshire.

245

## MACKERY END, IN HERTFORDSHIRE

**B**RIDGET ELIA has been my housekeeper for many a long year. I have obligations to Bridget, extending beyond the period of memory. We house together, old bachelor and maid, in a sort of double singleness; with  
5 such tolerable comfort, upon the whole, that I, for one, find in myself no sort of disposition to go out upon the mountains, with the rash king's offspring, to bewail my celibacy. We agree pretty well in our tastes and habits—yet so, as “with a difference.” We are generally in harmony, with  
10 occasional bickerings—as it should be among near relations. Our sympathies are rather understood, than expressed; and once, upon my dissembling a tone in my voice more kind than ordinary, my cousin burst into tears, and complained that I was altered. We are both great readers in different  
15 directions. While I am hanging over (for the thousandth time) some passage in old Burton, or one of his strange contemporaries, she is abstracted in some modern tale, or adventure, whereof our common reading-table is daily fed with assiduously fresh supplies. Narrative teases me. I  
20 have little concern in the progress of events. She must have a story—well, ill, or indifferently told—so there be life stirring in it, and plenty of good or evil accidents. The fluctuations of fortune in fiction—and almost in real life—have ceased to interest, or operate but dully upon me.  
25 Out-of-the-way humours and opinions—heads with some diverting twist in them—the oddities of authorship please me most. My cousin has a native disrelish of anything that sounds odd or bizarre. Nothing goes down with her, that is quaint, irregular, or out of the road of common

sympathy. She "holds Nature more clever." I can 30  
pardon her blindness to the beautiful obliquities of the  
Religio Medici; but she must apologise to me for certain  
disrespectful insinuations, which she has been pleased to  
throw out latterly, touching the intellectuals of a dear  
favourite of mine, of the last century but one—the thrice 35  
noble, chaste, and virtuous,—but again somewhat fantastical,  
and original-brained, generous Margaret Newcastle.

It has been the lot of my cousin, oftener perhaps than I  
could have wished, to have had for her associates and mine,  
free-thinkers—leaders, and disciples, of novel philosophies 40  
and systems; but she neither wrangles with, nor accepts,  
their opinions. That which was good and venerable to her,  
when a child, retains its authority over her mind still. She  
never juggles or plays tricks with her understanding.

We are both of us inclined to be a little too positive; 45  
and I have observed the result of our disputes to be almost  
uniformly this—that in matters of fact, dates, and circum-  
stances, it turns out, that I was in the right, and my  
cousin in the wrong. But where we have differed upon  
moral points; upon something proper to be done, or let 50  
alone; whatever heat of opposition, or steadiness of con-  
viction, I set out with, I am sure always, in the long-run, to  
be brought over to her way of thinking.

I must touch upon the foibles of my kinswoman with  
a gentle hand, for Bridget does not like to be told of her 55  
faults. She hath an awkward trick (to say no worse of it)  
of reading in company: at which times she will answer *yes*  
or *no* to a question, without fully understanding its purport  
—which is provoking, and derogatory in the highest degree  
to the dignity of the putter of the said question. Her 60  
presence of mind is equal to the most pressing trials of life,  
but will sometimes desert her upon trifling occasions. When  
the purpose requires it, and is a thing of moment, she can  
speak to it greatly; but in matters which are not stuff of  
the conscience, she hath been known sometimes to let slip a 65  
word less seasonably.

Her education in youth was not much attended to; and

she happily missed all that train of female garniture, which passeth by the name of accomplishments. She was tumbled  
70 early, by accident or design, into a spacious closet of good old English reading, without much selection or prohibition, and browsed at will upon that fair and wholesome pasturage. Had I twenty girls, they should be brought up exactly in this fashion. I know not whether their chance in wedlock  
75 might not be diminished by it; but I can answer for it, that it makes (if the worst come to the worst) most incomparable old maids.

In a season of distress, she is the truest comforter; but in the teasing accidents, and minor perplexities, which do not  
80 call out the *will* to meet them, she sometimes maketh matters worse by an excess of participation. If she does not always divide your trouble, upon the pleasanter occasions of life she is sure always to treble your satisfaction. She is excellent to be at a play with, or upon a visit; but best, when she  
85 goes a journey with you.

We made an excursion together a few summers since, into Hertfordshire, to beat up the quarters of some of our less-known relations in that fine corn country.

The oldest thing I remember is Mackery End—or  
90 Mackarel End, as it is spelt, perhaps more properly, in some old maps of Hertfordshire—a farm-house, delightfully situated within a gentle walk from Wheathampstead. I can just remember having been there, on a visit to a great-aunt, when I was a child under the care of Bridget; who, as I  
95 have said, is older than myself by some ten years. I wish that I could throw into a heap the remainder of our joint existences; that we might share them in equal division. But that is impossible. The house was at that time in the occupation of a substantial yeoman, who had married my  
100 grandmother's sister. His name was Gladman. My grandmother was a Bruton, married to a Field. The Gladmans and the Brutons are still flourishing in that part of the county, but the Fields are almost extinct. More than forty years had elapsed since the visit I speak of; and, for the  
105 greater portion of that period, we had lost sight of the other

two branches also. Who or what sort of persons inherited Mackery End—kindred or strange folk—we were afraid almost to conjecture, but determined some day to explore.

By somewhat a circuitous route, taking the noble park at Luton in our way from Saint Albans, we arrived at the spot 110 of our anxious curiosity about noon. The sight of the old farmhouse, though every trace of it was effaced from my recollection, affected me with a pleasure which I had not experienced for many a year. For though *I* had forgotten it, *we* had never forgotten being there together, and we had 115 been talking about Mackery End all our lives, till memory on my part became mocked with a phantom of itself, and I thought I knew the aspect of a place, which, when present, O how unlike it was to *that*, which I had conjured up so many times instead of it! 120

Still the air breathed balmily about it; the season was in the “heart of June,” and I could say with the poet—

But thou, that didst appear so fair  
To fond imagination,  
Dost rival in the light of day 125  
Her delicate creation!

Bridget's was more a waking bliss than mine, for she easily remembered her old acquaintance again—some altered features, of course, a little grudged at. At first, indeed, she was ready to disbelieve for joy; but the scene soon re- 130 confirmed itself in her affections—and she traversed every outpost of the old mansion, to the wood-house, the orchard, the place where the pigeon-house had stood (house and birds were alike flown)—with a breathless impatience of recognition, which was more pardonable perhaps than decorous at 135 the age of fifty odd. But Bridget in some things is behind her years.

The only thing left was to get into the house—and that was a difficulty which to me singly would have been insurmountable; for I am terribly shy in making myself 140 known to strangers and out-of-date kinsfolk. Love, stronger than scruple, winged my cousin in without me; but she

soon returned with a creature that might have sat to a sculptor for the image of Welcome. It was the youngest of  
145 the Gladmans; who, by marriage with a Bruton, had become mistress of the old mansion. A comely brood are the Brutons. Six of them, females, were noted as the handsomest young women in the county. But this adopted Bruton, in my mind, was better than they all—more comely.  
150 She was born too late to have remembered me. She just recollected in early life to have had her cousin Bridget once pointed out to her, climbing a stile. But the name of kindred, and of cousinship, was enough. Those slender ties, that prove slight as gossamer in the rending atmosphere  
155 of a metropolis, bind faster, as we found it, in hearty, homely, loving Hertfordshire. In five minutes we were as thoroughly acquainted as if we had been born and bred up together; were familiar, even to the calling each other by our Christian names. So Christians should call one another.  
160 To have seen Bridget, and her—it was like the meeting of the two scriptural cousins! There was a grace and dignity, an amplitude of form and stature, answering to her mind, in this farmer's wife, which would have shined in a palace—or so we thought it. We were made welcome by husband  
165 and wife equally—we, and our friend that was with us.—I had almost forgotten him—but B. F. will not so soon forget that meeting, if peradventure he shall read this on the far distant shores where the kangaroo haunts. The fatted calf was made ready, or rather was already so, as if in anticipation  
170 of our coming; and, after an appropriate glass of native wine, never let me forget with what honest pride this hospitable cousin made us proceed to Wheathampstead, to introduce us (as some new-found rarity) to her mother and sister Gladmans, who did indeed know something more of us, at a  
175 time when she almost knew nothing.—With what corresponding kindness we were received by them also—how Bridget's memory, exalted by the occasion, warmed into a thousand half-obliterated recollections of things and persons, to my utter astonishment, and her own—and to the astound-  
180 ment of B. F. who sat by, almost the only thing that was

not a cousin there,—old effaced images of more than half-forgotten names and circumstances still crowding back upon her, as words written in lemon come out upon exposure to a friendly warmth,—when I forget all this, then may my country cousins forget me ; and Bridget no more remember, 185 that in the days of weakling infancy I was her tender charge—as I have been her care in foolish manhood since—in those pretty pastoral walks, long ago, about Mackery End, in Hertfordshire.

## BLAKESMOOR IN H—SHIRE

I DO not know a pleasure more affecting than to range at will over the deserted apartments of some fine old family mansion. The traces of extinct grandeur admit of a better passion than envy: and contemplations on the great and good, whom we fancy in succession to have been its inhabitants, weave for us illusions, incompatible with the bustle of modern occupaney, and vanities of foolish present aristocracy. The same difference of feeling, I think, attends us between entering an empty and a crowded church. In the latter it is chance but some present human frailty—an act of inattention on the part of some of the auditory—or a trait of affectation, or worse, vain-glory on that of the preacher—puts us by our best thoughts, disharmonising the place and the occasion. But wouldst thou know the beauty of holiness?—go alone on some week-day, borrowing the keys of good Master Sexton, traverse the cool aisles of some country church: think of the piety that has kneeled there—the congregations, old and young, that have found consolation there—the meek pastor—the docile parishioner. With no disturbing emotions, no cross conflicting comparisons, drink in the tranquillity of the place, till thou thyself become as fixed and motionless as the marble effigies that kneel and weep around thee.

Journeying northward lately, I could not resist going some few miles out of my road to look upon the remains of an old great house with which I had been impressed in this way in infancy. I was apprised that the owner of it had lately pulled it down; still I had a vague notion that it could not all have perished, that so much solidity with



magnificence could not have been crushed all at once into 30  
the mere dust and rubbish which I found it.

The work of ruin had proceeded with a swift hand indeed,  
and the demolition of a few weeks had reduced it to—an  
antiquity.

I was astonished at the indistinction of everything. 35  
Where had stood the great gates? What bounded the  
court-yard? Whereabout did the out-houses commence?  
A few bricks only lay as representatives of that which was  
so stately and so spacious.

Death does not shrink up his human victim at this rate. 40  
The burnt ashes of a man weigh more in their proportion.

Had I seen these brick-and-mortar knaves at their process  
of destruction, at the plucking of every panel I should have  
felt the varlets at my heart. I should have cried out to  
them to spare a plank at least out of the cheerful store-room, 45  
in whose hot window-seat I used to sit and read Cowley,  
with the grass-plot before, and the hum and flappings of that  
one solitary wasp that ever haunted it about me—it is in  
mine ears now, as oft as summer returns: or a panel of the  
yellow-room. 50

Why, every plank and panel of that house for me had  
magic in it. The tapestried bed-rooms—tapestry so much  
better than painting—not adorning merely, but peopling the  
wainscots—at which childhood ever and anon would steal a  
look, shifting its coverlid (replaced as quickly) to exercise 55  
its tender courage in a momentary eye-encounter with those  
stern bright visages, staring reciprocally—all Ovid on the  
walls, in colours vider than his descriptions. Actæon in  
mid sprout, with the unappeasable prudery of Diana; and  
the still more provoking, and almost culinary coolness of 60  
Dan Phœbus, eel-fashion, deliberately divesting of Marsyas.

Then, that haunted room—in which old Mrs. Battle died  
—whereinto I have crept, but always in the day-time, with  
a passion of fear; and a sneaking curiosity, terror-tainted,  
to hold communication with the past.—*How shall they build 65*  
*it up again?*

It was an old deserted place, yet not so long deserted but

that traces of the splendour of past inmates were everywhere  
 70 apparent. Its furniture was still standing—even to the  
 tarnished gilt leather battledores, and crumbling feathers of  
 shuttlecocks in the nursery, which told that children had  
 once played there. But I was a lonely child, and had the  
 range at will of every apartment, knew every nook and  
 corner, wondered and worshipped everywhere.

75 The solitude of childhood is not so much the mother of  
 thought, as it is the feeder of love, and silence, and admiration.  
 So strange a passion for the place possessed me in those  
 years, that, though there lay—I shame to say how few roods  
 distant from the mansion—half hid by trees what I judged  
 80 some romantic lake, such was the spell which bound me to  
 the house, and such my carefulness not to pass its strict and  
 proper precincts, that the idle waters lay unexplored for me;  
 and not till late in life, curiosity prevailing over elder  
 devotion, I found, to my astonishment, a pretty brawling  
 85 brook had been the *Lacus Incognitus* of my infancy.  
 Variegated views, extensive prospects—and those at no  
 great distance from the house—I was told of such—what  
 were they to me, being out of the boundaries of my Eden?  
 —So far from a wish to roam, I would have drawn, methought,  
 90 still closer the fences of my chosen prison; and have been  
 hemmed in by a yet securer cincture of those excluding  
 garden walls. I could have exclaimed with that garden-  
 loving poet—

95 Bind me, ye woodbines, in your twines;  
 Curl me about, ye gadding vines;  
 And oh, so close your circles lace,  
 That I may never leave this place;  
 But, lest your fetters prove too weak,  
 Ere I your silken bondage break,  
 100 Do you, O brambles, chain me too,  
 And, courteous briars, nail me through.

I was here as in a lonely temple. Snug fire-sides—the  
 low-built roof—parlours ten feet by ten—frugal boards, and  
 105 all the homeliness of home—these were the condition of  
 my birth—the wholesome soil which I was planted in.

Yet, without impeachment to their tenderest lessons, I am not sorry to have had glances of something beyond; and to have taken, if but a peep, in childhood, at the contrasting accidents of a great fortune.

110

To have the feeling of gentility, it is not necessary to have been born gentle. The pride of ancestry may be had on cheaper terms than to be obliged to an importunate race of ancestors; and the coatless antiquary in his unemblazoned cell, revolving the long line of a Mowbray's or De Clifford's pedigree, at those sounding names may warm himself into as gay a vanity as these who do inherit them. The claims of birth are ideal merely, and what herald shall go about to strip me of an idea? Is it trenchant to their swords? can it be hacked off as a spur can? or torn away like a tarnished garter?

120

What else were the families of the great to us? what pleasure should we take in their tedious genealogies, or their capitulatory brass monuments? What to us the uninterrupted current of their bloods, if our own did not answer within us to a cognate and correspondent elevation?

125

Or wherefore else, O tattered and diminished 'Scutcheon that hung upon the time-worn walls of thy princely stairs, BLAKESMOOR! have I in childhood so oft stood poring upon the mystic characters—thy emblematic supporters, with their prophetic "Resurgam"—till, every dreg of peasantry purging off, I received into myself Very Gentility? Thou wert first in my morning eyes; and of nights hast detained my steps from bedward, till it was but a step from gazing at thee to dreaming on thee.

135

This is the only true gentry by adoption; the veritable change of blood, and not, as empirics have fabled, by transfusion.

Who it was by dying that had earned the splendid trophy, I know not, I inquired not; but its fading rags, and colours cobweb-stained, told that its subject was of two centuries back.

140

And what if my ancestor at that date was some Damocetas—feeding flocks—not his own, upon the hills of Lincoln—

145 did I in less earnest vindicate to myself the family trappings of this once proud Ægon? repaying by a backward triumph the insults he might possibly have heaped in his life-time upon my poor pastoral progenitor.

If it were presumption so to speculate, the present owners  
150 of the mansion had least reason to complain. They had long forsaken the old house of their fathers for a newer trifle; and I was left to appropriate to myself what images I could pick up, to raise my fancy, or to soothe my vanity.

I was the true descendant of those old W——s; and not  
155 the present family of that name, who had fled the old waste places.

Mine was that gallery of good old family portraits, which as I have gone over, giving them in fancy my own family name, one—and then another—would seem to smile,  
160 reaching forward from the canvas, to recognise the new relationship; while the rest looked grave, as it seemed, at the vacancy in their dwelling, and thoughts of fled posterity.

That Beauty with the cool blue pastoral drapery, and a  
165 lamb—that hung next the great bay window—with the bright yellow H——shire hair, and eye of watchet hue—so like my Alice!—I am persuaded she was a true Elia—Mildred Elia, I take it.

Mine, too, BLAKESMOOR, was thy noble Marble Hall with  
170 its mosaic pavements, and its Twelve Cæsars—stately busts in marble—ranged round; of whose countenances, young reader of faces as I was, the frowning beauty of Nero, I remember, had most of my wonder; but the mild Galba had my love. There they stood in the coldness of death, yet  
175 freshness of immortality.

Mine too thy lofty Justice Hall, with its one chair of authority, high-backed and wickered, once the terror of luckless poacher, or self-forgetful maiden—so common since, that bats have roosted in it.

180 Mine too—whose else?—thy costly fruit-garden, with its sun-baked southern wall; the ampler pleasure-garden, rising backwards from the house in triple terraces, with flower-

roofs now of palest lead, save that a speck here and there,  
saved from the elements, bespake their pristine state to have  
been gilt and glittering; the verdant quarters backward 185  
still; and, stretching still beyond, in old formality, thy firry  
wilderness, the haunt of the squirrel, and the day-long  
murmuring wood-pigeon, with that antique image in the  
centre, God or Goddess I wist not; but child of Athens or  
old Rome paid never a sincerer worship to Pan or to 190  
Sylvanus in their native groves, than I to that fragmental  
mystery.

Was it for this, that I kissed my childish hands too  
fervently in your idol-worship, walks and windings of  
BLAKESMOOR! for this, or what sin of mine, has the plough 195  
passed over your pleasant places? I sometimes think that  
as men, when they die, do not die all, so of their  
extinguished habitations there may be a hope—a germ to  
be revived.

## THE OLD BENCHERS OF THE INNER TEMPLE

I WAS born, and passed the first seven years of my life, in the Temple. Its church, its halls, its gardens, its fountain, its river, I had almost said—for in those young years, what was this king of rivers to me but a stream that  
5 watered our pleasant places?—these are of my oldest recollections. I repeat, to this day, no verses to myself more frequently, or with kindlier emotion, than those of Spenser, where he speaks of this spot.

10           There when they came, whereas those bricky towers,  
The which on Themmes brode aged back doth ride,  
Where now the studious lawyers have their bowers,  
There whylome went the Templer knights to bide,  
Till they decay through pride.

Indeed, it is the most elegant spot in the metropolis. What  
15 a transition for a countryman visiting London for the first time—the passing from the crowded Strand or Fleet-street, by unexpected avenues, into its magnificent ample squares, its classic green recesses! What a cheerful, liberal look hath that portion of it, which, from three sides, overlooks  
20 the greater garden, that goodly pile

Of building strong, albeit of Paper hight,

confronting, with massy contrast, the lighter, older, more  
fantastically shrouded one, named of Harcourt, with the  
cheerful Crown-office Row (place of my kindly engendure),  
25 right opposite the stately stream, which washes the garden-foot with her yet scarcely trade-polluted waters, and seems

out just weaned from her Twickenham Naiades! a man  
 would give something to have been born in such places.  
 What a collegiate aspect has that fine Elizabethan hall,  
 where the fountain plays, which I have made to rise and 30  
 fall, how many times! to the astoundment of the young  
 archins, my contemporaries, who, not being able to guess at  
 its recondite machinery, were almost tempted to hail the  
 vondrous work as magic! What an antique air had the  
 now almost effaced sun-dials, with their moral inscriptions, 35  
 seeming coevals with that Time which they measured, and  
 to take their revelations of its flight immediately from  
 heaven, holding correspondence with the fountain of light!  
 How would the dark line steal imperceptibly on, watched 40  
 by the eye of childhood, eager to detect its movement, never  
 watched, nice as an evanescent cloud, or the first arrests of  
 sleep!

Ah! yet doth beauty like a dial-hand  
 Steal from his figure, and no pace perceived!

What a dead thing is a clock, with its ponderous embowel- 45  
 ments of lead and brass, its pert or solemn dulness of com-  
 munication, compared with the simple altar-like structure,  
 and silent heart-language of the old dial! It stood as the  
 garden god of Christian gardens. Why is it almost every-  
 where vanished? If its business-use be superseded by more 50  
 elaborate inventions, its moral uses, its beauty, might have  
 pleaded for its continuance. It spoke of moderate labours,  
 of pleasures not protracted after sun-set, of temperance, and  
 good hours. It was the primitive clock, the horologe of the  
 first world. Adam could scarce have missed it in Paradise. 55  
 It was the measure appropriate for sweet plants and flowers  
 to spring by, for the birds to apportion their silver warblings  
 by, for flocks to pasture and be led to fold by. The shepherd  
 "carved it out quaintly in the sun;" and, turning philosopher  
 by the very occupation, provided it with mottoes more 60  
 touching than tombstones. It was a pretty device of the  
 gardener, recorded by Marvell, who, in the days of artificial  
 gardening, made a dial out of herbs and flowers. I must

quote his verses a little higher up, for they are full, as  
 65 his serious poetry was, of a witty delicacy. They will  
 come in awkwardly, I hope, in a talk of fountains, and su-  
 dials. He is speaking of sweet garden scenes:—

70           What wondrous life is this I lead!  
               Ripe apples drop about my head.  
               The luscious clusters of the vine  
               Upon my mouth do crush their wine.  
               The nectarine, and curious peach,  
               Into my hands themselves do reach.  
 75           Stumbling on melons, as I pass,  
               Insnares with flowers, I fall on grass.  
               Meanwhile the mind from pleasure less  
               Withdraws into its happiness;  
               The mind, that ocean, where each kind  
               Does straight its own resemblance find;  
 80           Yet it creates, transcending these,  
               Far other worlds, and other seas;  
               Annihilating all that's made  
               To a green thought in a green shade.  
               Here at the fountain's sliding foot,  
               Or at some fruit-tree's mossy root,  
 85           Casting the body's vest aside,  
               My soul into the boughs does glide;  
               There, like a bird, it sits and sings,  
               Then whets and claps its silver wings,  
               Then whets and claps its silver wings,  
 90           And, till prepared for longer flight,  
               Waves in its plumes the various light.  
               How well the skilful gardener drew,  
               Of flowers and herbs, this dial new;  
               Where, from above, the milder sun  
               Does through a fragrant zodiac run:  
 95           And, as it works, the industrious bee  
               Computes its time as well as we.  
               How could such sweet and wholesome hours  
               Be reckon'd, but with herbs and flowers? \*

100   The artificial fountains of the metropolis are, in like  
 manner, fast vanishing. Most of them are dried up, or  
 bricked over. Yet, where one is left, as in that little green  
 nook behind the South-Sea House, what a freshness it gives  
 to the dreary pile! Four little winged marble boys used to

\* From a copy of verses entitled *The Garden*.



by their virgin fancies, spouting out ever fresh streams 105  
 from their innocent-wanton lips in the square of Lincoln's  
 Inn, when I was no bigger than they were figured. They  
 are gone, and the spring choked up. The fashion, they tell  
 me, is gone by, and these things are esteemed childish.  
 Why not then gratify children, by letting them stand? 110  
 Lawyers, I suppose, were children once. They are awaken-  
 ing images to them at least. Why must everything smack  
 of man and mannish? Is the world all grown up? Is  
 childhood dead? Or is there not in the bosoms of the  
 wisest and the best some of the child's heart left, to respond 115  
 to its earliest enchantments? The figures were grotesque.  
 Are the stiff-wigged living figures, that still flitter and chatter  
 about that area, less Gothic in appearance? or is the splutter  
 of their hot rhetoric one half so refreshing and innocent as  
 the little cool playful streams those exploded cherubs 120  
 scattered?

They have lately gothicised the entrance to the Inner  
 Temple-hall, and the library front: to assimilate them, I  
 suppose, to the body of the hall, which they do not at all  
 resemble. What is become of the winged horse that stood 125  
 over the former? a stately arms! and who has removed  
 those frescoes of the Virtues, which Italianised the end of  
 the Paper-buildings?—my first hint of allegory! They  
 must account to me for these things, which I miss so greatly.

The terrace is, indeed, left, which we used to call the 130  
 parade; but the traces are passed away of the footsteps  
 which made its pavement awful! It is become common  
 and profane. The old benchers had it almost sacred to  
 themselves, in the forepart of the day at least. They might  
 not be sided or jostled. Their air and dress asserted the 135  
 parade. You left wide spaces betwixt you, when you  
 passed them. We walk on even terms with their successors.  
 The roguish eye of J——ll, ever ready to be delivered of a  
 jest, almost invites a stranger to vie a repartee with it. But  
 what insolent familiar durst have mated Thomas Coventry? 140  
 —whose person was a quadrate, his step massy and  
 elephantine, his face square as the lion's, his gait peremptory

and path-keeping, indivertible from his way as a moving column, the scarecrow of his inferiors, the brow-beater of equals and superiors, who made a solitude of children wherever he came, for they fled his insufferable presence, as they would have shunned an Elisha bear. His growl was as thunder in their ears, whether he spake to them in mirth or in rebuke, his invitatory notes being, indeed, of all, the most repulsive and horrid. Clouds of snuff, aggravating the natural terrors of his speech, broke from each majestic nostril, darkening the air. He took it, not by pinches, but a palmful at once, diving for it under the mighty flaps of his old-fashioned waistcoat pocket; his waistcoat red and angry, his coat dark rappee, tintured by dye original, and by adjuncts, with buttons of obsolete gold. And so he paced the terrace.

By his side a milder form was sometimes to be seen; the pensive gentility of Samuel Salt. They were coëvals, and had nothing but that and their benchership in common. In politics Salt was a whig, and Coventry a staunch tory. Many a sarcastic growl did the latter cast out—for Coventry had a rough spinous humour—at the political confederates of his associate, which rebounded from the gentle bosom of the latter like cannon-balls from wool. You could not ruffle Samuel Salt.

S. had the reputation of being a very clever man, and of excellent discernment in the chamber practice of the law. I suspect his knowledge did not amount to much. When a case of difficult disposition of money, testamentary or otherwise, came before him, he ordinarily handed it over with a few instructions to his man Lovel, who was a quick little fellow, and would despatch it out of hand by the light of natural understanding, of which he had an uncommon share. It was incredible what repute for talents S. enjoyed by the mere trick of gravity. He was a shy man; a child might pose him in a minute—indolent and procrastinating to the last degree. Yet men would give him credit for vast application, in spite of himself. He was not to be trusted with himself with impunity. He never dressed for a

dinner party but he forgot his sword—they wore swords then—or some other necessary part of his equipage. Lovel had his eye upon him on all these occasions, and ordinarily gave him his cue. If there was anything which he could speak unseasonably, he was sure to do it.—He was to dine 185 at a relative's of the unfortunate Miss Blandy on the day of her execution;—and L. who had a wary foresight of his probable hallucinations, before he set out, schooled him with great anxiety not in any possible manner to allude to her story that day. S. promised faithfully to observe 190 the injunction. He had not been seated in the parlour, where the company was expecting the dinner summons, four minutes, when, a pause in the conversation ensuing, he got up, looked out of window, and pulling down his ruffles—an ordinary motion with him—observed, “it was a gloomy 195 day,” and added, “Miss Blandy must be hanged by this time, I suppose.” Instances of this sort were perpetual. Yet S. was thought by some of the greatest men of his time a fit person to be consulted, not alone in matters pertaining to the law, but in the ordinary niceties and 200 embarrassments of conduct—from force of manner entirely. He never laughed. He had the same good fortune among the female world,—was a known toast with the ladies, and one or two are said to have died for love of him—I suppose, because he never trifled or talked gallantry with them, or 205 paid them, indeed, hardly common attentions. He had a fine face and person, but wanted, methought, the spirit that should have shown them off with advantage to the women. His eye lacked lustre.—Not so, thought Susan P——; who, at the advanced age of sixty, was seen, in the cold evening 210 time, unaccompanied, wetting the pavement of B——d Row, with tears that fell in drops which might be heard, because her friend had died that day—he, whom she had pursued with a hopeless passion, for the last forty years—a passion, which years could not extinguish or abate; nor the long- 215 resolved, yet gently-enforced, puttings off of unrelenting bachelorhood dissuade from its cherished purpose. Mild Susan P——, thou hast now thy friend in heaven!

Thomas Coventry was a cadet of the noble family of that  
 220 name. He passed his youth in contracted circumstances,  
 which gave him early those parsimonious habits which in  
 after-life never forsook him ; so that, with one windfall or  
 another, about the time I knew him he was master of four  
 or five hundred thousand pounds ; nor did he look, or  
 225 walk, worth a moidore less. He lived in a gloomy  
 house opposite the pump in Serjeant's-inn, Fleet-street.  
 J., the counsel, is doing self-imposed penance in it, for what  
 reason I divine not, at this day. C. had an agreeable seat  
 at North Cray, where he seldom spent above a day or  
 230 two at a time in the summer ; but preferred, during the  
 hot months, standing at his window in this damp, close,  
 well-like mansion, to watch, as he said, "the maids drawing  
 water all day long." I suspect he had his within-door  
 reasons for the preference. *Hic currus et arma fuère.* He  
 235 might think his treasures more safe. His house had the  
 aspect of a strong-box. C. was a close hunk—a hoarder  
 rather than a miser—or, if a miser, none of the mad Elwes  
 breed, who have brought discredit upon a character, which  
 cannot exist without certain admirable points of steadiness  
 240 and unity of purpose. One may hate a true miser, but can-  
 not, I suspect, so easily despise him. By taking care of the  
 pence, he is often enabled to part with the pounds, upon a  
 scale that leaves us careless generous fellows halting at an  
 immeasurable distance behind. C. gave away 30,000*l.* at  
 245 once in his lifetime to a blind charity. His housekeeping  
 was severely looked after, but he kept the table of a gentle-  
 man. He would know who came in and who went out of  
 his house, but his kitchen chimney was never suffered to  
 freeze.  
 250 Salt was his opposite in this, as in all—never knew  
 what he was worth in the world ; and having but a com-  
 petency for his rank, which his indolent habits were little  
 calculated to improve, might have suffered severely if he  
 had not had honest people about him. Lovel took care of  
 255 everything. He was at once his clerk, his good servant, his  
 dresser, his friend, his "flapper," his guide, stop-watch,

auditor, treasurer. He did nothing without consulting Lovel, failed in anything without expecting and fearing his admonishing. He put himself almost too much in his hands, had they not been the purest in the world. He resigned his title almost to respect as a master, if L. could ever have forgotten for a moment that he was a servant. 260

I knew this Lovel. He was a man of an incorrigible and losing honesty. A good fellow withal, and "would trike." In the cause of the oppressed he never considered 265 inequalities, or calculated the number of his opponents. He once wrested a sword out of the hand of a man of quality that had drawn upon him; and pommelled him everely with the hilt of it. The swordsman had offered insult to a female—an occasion upon which no odds against 270 him could have prevented the interference of Lovel. He would stand next day bareheaded to the same person, modestly to excuse his interference—for L. never forgot rank, where something better was not concerned. L. was the liveliest little fellow breathing, had a face as gay as 275 Garrick's, whom he was said greatly to resemble (I have a portrait of him which confirms it), possessed a fine turn for humorous poetry—next to Swift and Prior—moulded heads in clay or plaster of Paris to admiration, by the dint of natural genius merely; turned cribbage boards, and such small 280 cabinet toys, to perfection; took a hand at quadrille or bowls with equal facility; made punch better than any man of his degree in England; had the merriest quips and conceits; and was altogether as brimful of rogueries and inventions as you could desire. He was a brother of the angle, moreover, 285 and just such a free, hearty, honest companion as Mr. Izaak Walton would have chosen to go a fishing with. I saw him in his old age and the decay of his faculties, palsy-smitten, in the last sad stage of human weakness—"a remnant most forlorn of what he was,"—yet even then his eye would light 290 up upon the mention of his favourite Garrick. He was greatest, he would say, in Bayes—"was upon the stage nearly throughout the whole performance, and as busy as a bee." At intervals, too, he would speak of his former life, and

295 how he came up a little boy from Lincoln to go to service  
and how his mother cried at parting with him, and how  
he returned, after some few years' absence, in his smart new  
livery, to see her, and she blessed herself at the change, and  
could hardly be brought to believe that it was "her own  
300 bairn." And then, the excitement subsiding, he would weep  
till I have wished that sad second-childhood might have a  
mother still to lay its head upon her lap. But the common  
mother of us all in no long time after received him gently  
into hers.

305 With Coventry, and with Salt, in their walks upon the  
terrace, most commonly Peter Pierson would join to make  
up a third. They did not walk linked arm in arm in those  
days—"as now our stout triumvirs sweep the streets,"—  
but generally with both hands folded behind them for state,  
310 or with one at least behind, the other carrying a cane. P. was  
a benevolent, but not a prepossessing man. He had that in  
his face which you could not term unhappiness; it rather  
implied an incapacity of being happy. His cheeks were  
colourless even to whiteness. His look was uninviting,  
315 resembling (but without his sourness) that of our great  
philanthropist. I know that he *did* good acts, but I could  
never make out what he *was*. Contemporary with these,  
but subordinate, was Daines Barrington—another oddity;  
he walked burly and square—in imitation, I think, of  
320 Coventry; howbeit he attained not to the dignity of his  
prototype. Nevertheless, he did pretty well, upon the  
strength of being a tolerable antiquarian, and having a  
brother a bishop. When the account of his year's treasurer-  
ship came to be audited, the following singular charge  
325 was unanimously disallowed by the bench: "Item, dis-  
bursed Mr. Allen the gardener, twenty shillings, for stuff  
to poison the sparrows, by my orders." Next to him was  
old Barton—a jolly negation, who took upon him the  
ordering of the bills of fare for the parliament chamber,  
330 where the benchers dine—answering to the combination  
rooms, at College—much to the easement of his less  
Epicurean brethren. I know nothing more of him.—Then

Read, and Twopeny—Read, good-humoured and personable  
 —Twopeny, good-humoured, but thin, and felicitous in jests  
 upon his own figure. If T. was thin, Wharry was attenuated 335  
 and fleeting. Many must remember him (for he was rather  
 of later date) and his singular gait, which was performed  
 by three steps and a jump regularly succeeding. The steps  
 were little efforts, like that of a child beginning to walk ;  
 the jump comparatively vigorous, as a foot to an inch. 340  
 Where he learned this figure, or what occasioned it, I could  
 never discover. It was neither graceful in itself, nor seemed  
 to answer the purpose any better than common walking.  
 The extreme tenuity of his frame, I suspect, set him upon it.  
 It was a trial of poisoning. Twopeny would often rally him upon 345  
 his leanness, and hail him as brother Lusty ; but W. had no  
 relish of a joke. His features were spiteful. I have heard  
 that he would pinch his cat's ears extremely, when anything  
 had offended him. Jackson—the omniscient Jackson he was  
 called—was of this period. He had the reputation of 350  
 possessing more multifarious knowledge than any man of  
 his time. He was the Friar Bacon of the less literate  
 portion of the Temple. I remember a pleasant passage, of  
 the cook applying to him, with much formality of apology,  
 for instructions how to write down *edge* bone of beef in his 355  
 bill of commons. He was supposed to know, if any man in  
 the world did. He decided the orthography to be—as I  
 have given it—fortifying his authority with such anatomical  
 reasons as dismissed the manciple (for the time) learned and  
 happy. Some do spell it yet, perversely, *aitch* bone, from 360  
 a fanciful resemblance between its shape and that of the  
 aspirate so denominated. I had almost forgotten Mingay  
 with the iron hand—but he was somewhat later. He had  
 lost his right hand by some accident, and supplied it with a  
 grappling-hook, which he wielded with a tolerable adroitness. 365  
 I detected the substitute, before I was old enough to reason  
 whether it were artificial or not. I remember the astonish-  
 ment it raised in me. He was a blustering, loud-talking  
 person ; and I reconciled the phenomenon to my ideas as an  
 emblem of power—somewhat like the horns in the forehead 370



of Michael Angelo's Moses. Baron Maseres, who walks (or did till very lately) in the costume of the reign of George the Second, closes my imperfect recollections of the old benchers of the Inner Temple.

375 Fantastic forms, whither are ye fled? Or, if the like of you exist, why exist they no more for me? Ye inexplicable, half-understood appearances, why comes in reason to tear away the preternatural mist, bright or gloomy, that enshrouded you? Why make ye so sorry a figure in my relation,  
380 who made up to me—to my childish eyes—the mythology of the Temple? In those days I saw Gods, as “old men covered with a mantle,” walking upon the earth. Let the dreams of classic idolatry perish,—extinct be the fairies and fairy trumpery of legendary fabling, in the heart of  
385 childhood, there will, for ever, spring up a well of innocent or wholesome superstition—the seeds of exaggeration will be busy there, and vital—from every-day forms educing the unknown and the uncommon. In that little Goshen there will be light, when the grown world flounders about in the  
390 darkness of sense and materiality. While childhood, and while dreams, reducing childhood, shall be left, imagination shall not have spread her holy wings totally to fly the earth.

P.S.—I have done injustice to the soft shade of Samuel Salt. See what it is to trust to imperfect memory, and the  
395 erring notices of childhood! Yet I protest I always thought that he had been a bachelor! This gentleman, R. N. informs me, married young, and losing his lady in childbed, within the first year of their union, fell into a deep melancholy, from the effects of which, probably, he never  
400 thoroughly recovered. In what a new light does this place his rejection (O call it by a gentler name!) of mild Susan P——, unravelling into beauty certain peculiarities of this very shy and retiring character!—Henceforth let no one receive the narratives of Elia for true records! They are, in  
405 truth, but shadows of fact—verisimilitudes, not verities—or sitting but upon the remote edges and outskirts of history. He is no such honest chronicler as R. N., and would have done better perhaps to have consulted that



gentleman, before he sent these incondite reminiscences to press. But the worthy sub-treasurer—who respects his old 410 and his new masters—would but have been puzzled at the indecorous liberties of Elia. The good man wots not, peradventure, of the licence which *Magazines* have arrived at in this plain-speaking age, or hardly dreams of their existence beyond the *Gentleman's*—his furthest monthly excursions in 415 this nature having been long confined to the holy ground of honest *Urban's* obituary. May it be long before his own name shall help to swell those columns of unenvied flattery!—Meantime, O ye New Benchers of the Inner Temple, cherish him kindly, for he is himself the kindest of human 420 creatures. Should infirmities overtake him—he is yet in green and vigorous senility—make allowances for them, remembering that “ye yourselves are old.” So may the Winged Horse, your ancient badge and cognisance, still flourish! so may future Hookers and Seldens illustrate your 425 church and chambers! so may the sparrows, in default of more melodious quiristers, unpoisoned hop about your walks! so may the fresh-coloured and cleanly nursery-maid, who, by leave, airs her playful charge in your stately gardens, drop her prettiest blushing curtsy as ye pass, 430 reductive of juvenescent emotion! so may the youngers of this generation eye you, pacing your stately terrace, with the same superstitious veneration, with which the child Elia gazed on the Old Worthies that solemnised the parade before ye!

## OXFORD IN THE VACATION

CASTING a preparatory glance at the bottom of this article—as the wary connoisseur in prints, with cursory eye, (which, while it reads, seems as though it read not,) never fails to consult the *quis sculpsit* in the corner, before  
5 he pronounces some rare piece to be a Vivares, or a Woollet—methinks I hear you exclaim, Reader, *Who is Elia?*

Because in my last I tried to divert thee with some half-forgotten humours of some old clerks defunct, in an old house of business, long since gone to decay, doubtless you  
10 have already set me down in your mind as one of the self-same college—a votary of the desk—a notched and cropt scrivener—one that sucks his sustenance, as certain sick people are said to do, through a quill.

Well, I do agnize something of the sort. I confess that it  
15 is my humour, my fancy—in the fore-part of the day, when the mind of your man of letters requires some relaxation—(and none better than such as at first sight seems most abhorrent from his beloved studies)—to while away some good hours of my time in the contemplation of indigos,  
20 cottons, raw silks, piece-goods, flowered or otherwise. In the first place \* \* \* and then it sends you home with such increased appetite to your books \* \* \* not to say, that your outside sheets, and waste wrappers of foolscap, do receive into them, most kindly and naturally, the impression  
25 of sonnets, epigrams, *essays*—so that the very parings of a counting-house are, in some sort, the settings up of an author. The enfranchised quill, that has plodded all the morning among the cart-rucks of figures and ciphers, frisks and curvetts  
30 so at its ease over the flowery carpet-ground of a midnight

lissertation.—It feels its promotion. . . . So that you see, upon the whole, the literary dignity of *Elia* is very little, if at all, compromised in the condescension.

Not that, in my anxious detail of the many commodities incidental to the life of a public office, I would be thought blind to certain flaws, which a cunning carper might be able to pick in this Joseph's vest. And here I must have leave, in the fulness of my soul, to regret the abolition, and doing-away-with altogether, of those consolatory interstices, and sprinklings of freedom, through the four seasons,—the *red-letter days*, now become, to all intents and purposes, *dead-letter days*. There was Paul, and Stephen, and Barnabas—

Andrew and John, men famous in old times

—we were used to keep all their days holy, as long back as I was at school at Christ's. I remember their effigies, by the same token, in the old Baskett Prayer Book. There hung Peter in his uneasy posture—holy Bartlemy in the troublesome act of flaying, after the famous Marsyas by Spagnoletti. —I honoured them all, and could almost have wept the defalcation of Iscariot—so much did we love to keep holy memories sacred :—only methought I a little grudged at the coalition of the *better Jude* with Simon—clubbing (as it were) their sanctities together, to make up one poor gaudy-day between them—as an economy unworthy of the dispensation.

These were bright visitations in a scholar's and a clerk's life—"far off their coming shone."—I was as good as an almanac in those days. I could have told you such a saint's-day falls out next week, or the week after. Peradventure the Epiphany, by some periodical infelicity, would, once in six years, merge in a Sabbath. Now am I little better than one of the profane. Let me not be thought to arraign the wisdom of my civil superiors, who have judged the further observation of these holy tides to be papistical, superstitious. Only in a custom of such long standing, methinks, if their Holinesses the Bishops had, in decency, been first sounded— but I am wading out of my depths. I am not the man to decide the limits of civil and ecclesiastical authority—I

am plain Elia—no Selden, nor Archbishop Usher—though at present in the thick of their books, here in the heart of learning, under the shadow of the mighty Bodley.

I can here play the gentleman, enact the student.— Take such a one as myself, who has been defrauded in his young years of the sweet food of academic institution, nowhere so pleasant, to while away a few idle weeks at, as one of other of the Universities. Their vacation, too, at this time of the year, falls in so pat with *ours*. Here I can take my walks unmolested, and fancy myself of what degree or standing I please. I seem admitted *ad eundem*. I fetch up past opportunities. I can rise at the chapel-bell, and dream that it rings for *me*. In moods of humility I can be a Sizar, or Servitor. When the peacock vein rises, I strut a Gentleman Commoner. In graver moments I proceed Master of Arts. Indeed I do not think I am much unlike that respectable character. I have seen your dim-eyed vergers, and bed-makers in spectacles, drop a bow or a curtsy, as I pass wisely mistaking me for something of the sort. I go about in black, which favours the notion. Only in Christ Church reverend quadrangle, I can be content to pass for nothing short of a Seraphic Doctor.

The walks at these times are so much one's own,—the tall trees of Christ's, the groves of Magdalen! The halls deserted and with open doors inviting one to slip in unperceived, and pay a devoir to some Founder, or noble or royal Benefactress (that should have been ours), whose portrait seems to smile upon their over-looked beadsman, and to adopt me for their own. Then, to take a peep in by the way at the butteries, and sculleries, redolent of antique hospitality: the immense caves of kitchens, kitchen fire-places, cordial recesses; ovens whose first pies were baked four centuries ago; and spits which have cooked for Chaucer! Not the meanest minister among the dishes but is hallowed to me through his imagination, and the Cook goes forth a Manciple!

Antiquity! thou wondrous charm, what art thou? that being nothing, art everything! When thou wert, thou wert not antiquity—then thou wert nothing, but hadst a remoter

*iquity*, as thou calledst it, to look back to with blind  
 eration; thou thyself being to thyself flat, jejune, *modern!*  
 at mystery lurks in this retroversion? or what half  
 uses\* are we, that cannot look forward with the same  
 latory with which we for ever revert. The mighty future 110  
 is nothing, being everything! the past is everything, being  
 hing!

What were thy *dark ages*? Surely the sun rose as brightly  
 n as now, and man got him to his work in the morning.  
 hy is it we can never hear mention of them without an 115  
 ompanying feeling, as though a palpable obscure had  
 amed the face of things, and that our ancestors wandered  
 and fro groping!

Above all thy rarities, old Oxenford, what do most arride  
 l solace me, are thy repositories of mouldering learning, 120  
 7 shelves——

What a place to be in is an old library! It seems as though  
 the souls of all the writers, that have bequeathed their  
 ours to these Bodleians, were reposing here, as in some 125  
 emitory, or middle state. I do not want to handle, to pro-  
 ie the leaves, their winding-sheets. I could as soon  
 lodge a shade. I seem to inhale learning, walking amid  
 ir foliage; and the odour of their old moth-scented cover-  
 gs is fragrant as the first bloom of those sciential apples  
 ich grew amid the happy orchard. 130

Still less have I curiosity to disturb the elder repose of  
 SS.† Those *varie lectiones*, so tempting to the more  
 idite palates, do but disturb and unsettle my faith. I am  
 Herculanean raker. The credit of the three witnesses  
 ght have slept unimpeached for me. I leave these curio- 135  
 ies to Porson and to G. D.—whom, by the way, I found  
 sy as a moth over some rotten archive, rummaged out of  
 ne seldom-explored press, in a nook at Oriel. With long  
 ring, he is grown almost into a book. He stood as  
 ssive as one by the side of the old shelves. I longed to 140

\* "Januses of one face."—SIR THOMAS BROWNE.

† See Note at the end of the essay.

new-coat him in russia, and assign him his place. He might have mustered for a tall Scapula.

D. is assiduous in his visits to these seats of learning. An inconsiderable portion of his moderate fortune, I apprehend  
 145 is consumed in journeys between them and Clifford's-inn—where, like a dove on the asp's nest, he has long taken up his unconscious abode, amid an incongruous assembly of attorneys, attorneys' clerks, apparitors, promoters, vermin of the law, among whom he sits "in calm and sinless peace."  
 150 The fangs of the law pierce him not—the winds of litigation blow over his humble chambers—the hard sheriff's office moves his hat as he passes—legal nor illegal discourtesy touches him—none thinks of offering violence or injustice to him—you would as soon "strike an abstract idea."  
 155 D. has been engaged, he tells me, through a course of laborious years, in an investigation into all curious matters connected with the two Universities; and has lately hit upon a MS. collection of charters, relative to C—, by which he hopes to settle some disputed points—particularly  
 160 that long controversy between them as to priority of foundation. The ardour with which he engages in these liberal pursuits, I am afraid, has not met with all the encouragement it deserved, either here or at C—. Your caputs, and heads of colleges, care less than anybody else about these questions.  
 165 —Contented to suck the milky fountains of their Alma Maters, without inquiring into the venerable gentlewoman's years, they rather hold such curiosities to be impertinent—unreverend. They have their good glebe lands *in manu*, and care not much to rake into the title deeds. I gather, at  
 170 least, so much from other sources, for D. is not a man to complain.

D. started like an unbroke heifer, when I interrupted him. *A priori* it was not very probable that we should have met in Oriel. But D. would have done the same, had I accosted  
 175 him on the sudden in his own walks in Clifford's Inn, or in the Temple. In addition to a provoking short-sightedness (the effect of late studies and watchings at the midnight oil), D. is the most absent of men. He made a call the other

morning at our friend M.'s in Bedford Square; and, finding nobody at home, was ushered into the hall, where, asking for pen and ink, with great exactitude of purpose he enters his name in the book—which ordinarily lies about in such places, to record the failures of the untimely or unfortunate visitor, and takes his leave with many ceremonies, and professions of regret. Some two or three hours after, his walking destinies returned him into the same neighbourhood again, and again the quiet image of the fireside circle at M.'s—Mrs. M. presiding at it like a Queen Lar, with pretty A. S. at her side—striking irresistibly on his fancy, he makes another call (forgetting that they were “certainly not to return from the country before that day week”), and disappointed a second time, inquires for pen and paper as before; again the book is brought, and in the line just above that in which he is about to print his second name (his re-script)—his first name (scarce dry) looks out upon him like another Sosia, or as if a man should suddenly encounter his own duplicate!—The effect may be conceived. D. made many a good resolution against any such lapses in future. I hope he will not keep them too rigorously.

For with G. D.—to be absent from the body, is sometimes (not to speak it profanely) to be present with the Lord. At the very time when, personally encountering thee, he passes on with no recognition—or, being stopped, starts like a thing surprised—at that moment, reader, he is on Mount Tabor—or Parnassus—or co-sphered with Plato—or, with Harrington, framing “immortal commonwealths”—devising some plan of amelioration to thy country or thy species—peradventure meditating some individual kindness or courtesy, to be done to *thee thyself*, the returning consciousness of which made him to start so guiltily at thy obtruded personal presence.

D. commenced life, after a course of hard study in the house of “Pure Emanuel,” as usher to a knavish fanatic schoolmaster at \* \* \*, at a salary of eight pounds per annum, with board and lodging. Of this poor stipend, he never received above half in all the laborious years he served

this man. He tells a pleasant anecdote, that when poverty, staring out at his ragged knees, has sometimes compelled him, against the modesty of his nature, to hint at arrears, Dr. \* \* \* would take no immediate notice, but after supper, when the school was called together to evensong, he would never fail to introduce some instructive homily against riches, and the corruption of the heart occasioned through the desire of them—ending with “Lord, Keep Thy servants, above all things, from the heinous sin of avarice. Having food and raiment, let us therewithal be content. Give me Agur’s wish”—and the like—which, to the little auditory, sounded like a doctrine full of Christian prudence and simplicity, but to poor D. was a receipt in full for that quarter’s demand at least.

And D. has been underworking for himself ever since;—drudging at low rates for unappreciating booksellers—wasting his fine erudition in silent corrections of the classics, and in those unostentatious but solid services to learning which commonly fall to the lot of laborious scholars, who have not the heart to sell themselves to the best advantage. He has published poems, which do not sell, because their character is unobtrusive, like his own, and because he has been too much absorbed in ancient literature to know what the popular mark in poetry is, even if he could have hit it. And, therefore, his verses are properly what he terms them, *crochets*; voluntaries; odes to liberty and spring; effusions; little tributes and offerings, left behind him upon tables and window-seats at parting from friends’ houses; and from all the inns of hospitality, where he has been courteously (or but tolerably) received in his pilgrimage. If his muse of kindness halt a little behind the strong lines in fashion in this excitement-loving age, his prose is the best of the sort in the world, and exhibits a faithful transcript of his own healthy, natural mind, and cheerful, innocent tone of conversation.

D. is delightful anywhere, but he is at the best in such places as these. He cares not much for Bath. He is out of his element at Buxton, at Scarborough, or Harrowgate. Tel



Cam and the Isis are to him "better than all the waters of 255  
 Damascus." On the Muses' hill he is happy, and good, as  
 one of the Shepherds on the Delectable Mountains; and  
 when he goes about with you to show you the halls and  
 colleges, you think you have with you the Interpreter at the  
 House Beautiful. 200

NOTE.—In the *London Magazine* was appended the following note:  
 —"There is something to me repugnant at any time in written hand.  
 The text never seems determinate. Print settles it. I had thought  
 of the *Lycidas* as of a full-grown beauty—as springing up with all its  
 parts absolute—till, in an evil hour, I was shown the original copy of  
 it, together with the other minor poems of its author, in the library  
 of Trinity, kept like some treasure, to be proud of. I wish they had  
 thrown them in the Cam, or sent them after the latter Cantos of  
 Spenser, into the Irish Channel. How it staggered me to see the fine  
 things in their ore! interlined, corrected! as if their words were  
 mortal, alterable, displaceable at pleasure! as if they might have been  
 otherwise, and just as good! as if inspiration were made up of parts,  
 and these fluctuating, successive, indifferent! I will never go into the  
 workshop of any great artist again, nor desire a sight of his picture  
 till it is fairly off the easel: no, not if Raphael were to be alive again,  
 and painting another *Galatea*."

## THE OLD MARGATE HOY

I AM fond of passing my vacations (I believe I have said so before) at one or other of the Universities. Next to these my choice would fix me at some woody spot, such as the neighbourhood of Henley affords in abundance, on the banks of my beloved Thames. But somehow or other my cousin contrives to wheedle me, once in three or four seasons, to a watering-place. Old attachments cling to her in spite of experience. We have been dull at Worthing one summer, duller at Brighton another, dullest at Eastbourne a third, and are at this moment doing dreary penance at—Hastings!—and all because we were happy many years ago for a brief week at Margate. That was our first sea-side experiment, and many circumstances combined to make it the most agreeable holiday of my life. We had neither of us seen the sea, and we had never been from home so long together in company.

Can I forget thee, thou old *Margate Hoy*, with thy weather-beaten, sun-burnt captain, and his rough accommodations—ill exchanged for the foppery and fresh-water niceness of the modern steam-packet? To the winds and waves thou committedst thy goodly freightage, and didst ask no aid of magic fumes, and spells, and boiling caldrons. With the gales of heaven thou wentest swimmingly; or, when it was their pleasure, stoodest still with sailor-like patience. Thy course was natural, not forced, as in a hot-bed; nor didst thou go poisoning the breath of ocean with sulphureous smoke—a great sea chimera, chimneying and furnacing the deep; or liker to that fire-god parching up Scamander.

Can I forget thy honest, yet slender crew, with their coy reluctant responses (yet to the suppression of anything like contempt) to the raw questions, which we of the great city would be ever and anon putting to them, as to the uses of this or that strange naval implement? Specially can I forget thee, thou happy medium, thou shade of refuge between us and them, conciliating interpreter of their skill to our

simplicity, comfortable ambassador between sea and land!— 35  
whose sailor-trousers did not more convincingly assure thee  
to be an adopted denizen of the former, than thy white cap,  
and whiter apron over them, with thy neat-figured practice in  
thy culinary vocation, bespoke thee to have been of inland  
nurture heretofore—a master cook of Eastcheap? How 40  
easily didst thou ply thy multifarious occupation, cook,  
barber, barber, attendant, chamberlain: here, there, like another  
Ariel, flaming at once about all parts of the deck, yet with  
kindlier ministrations—not to assist the tempest, but, as if  
touched with a kindred sense of our infirmities, to soothe the 45  
qualms which that untried motion might haply raise in our  
rude land-fancies. And when the o'er-washing billows drove  
us below deck (for it was far gone in October, and we had  
stiff and blowing weather), how did thy officious ministrings,  
still catering for our comfort, with cards, and cordials, and 50  
thy more cordial conversation, alleviate the closeness and the  
confinement of thy else (truth to say) not very savoury, nor  
very inviting, little cabin?

With these additaments to boot, we had on board a fellow-  
passenger, whose discourse in verity might have beguiled a 55  
longer voyage than we meditated, and have made mirth and  
wonder abound as far as the Azores. He was a dark,  
Spanish-complexioned young man, remarkably handsome,  
with an officer-like assurance, and an insuppressible volu-  
bility of assertion. He was, in fact, the greatest liar I had 60  
met with then, or since. He was none of your hesitating,  
half story-tellers (a most painful description of mortals) who  
go on sounding your belief, and only giving you as much as  
they see you can swallow at a time—the nibbling pickpockets  
of your patience—but one who committed downright, day- 65  
light depredations upon his neighbour's faith. He did not  
stand shivering upon the brink, but was a hearty, thorough-  
paced liar, and plunged at once into the depths of your  
credulity. I partly believe, he made pretty sure of his com-  
pany. Not many rich, not many wise, or learned, composed at 70  
that time the common stowage of a Margate packet. We were,  
I am afraid, a set of as unseasoned Londoners (let our enemies

give it a worse name) as Aldermanbury, or Watling-street, at that time of day could have supplied. There might be an  
75 exception or two among us, but I scorn to make any invidious distinctions among such a jolly, companionable ship's company, as those were whom I sailed with. Something too must be conceded to the *Genius Loci*. Had the confident fellow told us half the legends on land, which he  
80 favoured us with on the other element, I flatter myself the good sense of most of us would have revolted. But we were in a new world, with everything unfamiliar about us, and the time and place disposed us to the reception of any prodigious marvel whatsoever. Time has obliterated from my memory  
85 much of his wild fablings; and the rest would appear but dull, as written, and to be read on shore. He had been Aide-de-camp (among other rare accidents and fortunes) to a Persian Prince, and at one blow had stricken off the head of the King of Carimania on horseback. He, of course, married  
90 the Prince's daughter. I forget what unlucky turn in the politics of that court, combining with the loss of his consort, was the reason of his quitting Persia; but, with the rapidity of a magician, he transported himself, along with his hearers,  
\* back to England, where we still found him in the confidence  
95 of great ladies. There was some story of a princess—Elizabeth, if I remember—having intrusted to his care an extraordinary casket of jewels, upon some extraordinary occasion—but, as I am not certain of the name or circumstance at this distance of time, I must leave it to the Royal daughters of England  
100 to settle the honour among themselves in private. I cannot call to mind half his pleasant wonders; but I perfectly remember, that in the course of his travels he had seen a phœnix; and he obligingly undeceived us of the vulgar error, that there is but one of that species at a time, assuring us  
105 that they were not uncommon in some parts of Upper Egypt. Hitherto he had found the most implicit listeners. His dreaming fancies had transported us beyond the “ignorant present.” But when (still hardying more and more in his triumphs over our simplicity) he went on to affirm that he had  
110 actually sailed through the legs of the Colossus at Rhodes,

it really became necessary to make a stand. And here I must do justice to the good sense and intrepidity of one of our party, a youth, that had hitherto been one of his most deferential auditors, who, from his recent reading, made bold to assure the gentleman that there must be some mistake, as 115  
“the Colossus in question had been destroyed long since;” to whose opinion, delivered with all modesty, our hero was obliging enough to concede thus much, that “the figure was indeed a little damaged.” This was the only opposition he met with, and it did not at all seem to stagger him, for he 120  
proceeded with his fables, which the same youth appeared to swallow with still more complacency than ever,—confirmed, as it were, by the extreme candour of that concession. With these prodigies he wheedled us on till we came in sight of the Reculvers, which one of our own company (having been 125  
the voyage before) immediately recognising, and pointing out to us, was considered by us as no ordinary seaman.

All this time sat upon the edge of the deck quite a different character. It was a lad, apparently very poor, very infirm, and very patient. His eye was ever on the sea, with a smile; 130  
and, if he caught now and then some snatches of these wild legends, it was by accident, and they seemed not to concern him. The waves to him whispered more pleasant stories. He was as one, being with us, but not of us. He heard the bell of dinner ring without stirring; and when some of us 135  
pulled out our private stores—our cold meat and our salads—he produced none, and seemed to want none. Only a solitary biscuit he had laid in; provision for the one or two days and nights, to which these vessels then were oftentimes obliged to prolong their voyage. Upon a nearer acquaintance 140  
with him, which he seemed neither to court nor decline, we learned that he was going to Margate, with the hope of being admitted into the Infirmary there for sea-bathing. His disease was a scrofula, which appeared to have eaten all over him. He expressed great hopes of a cure; and when we 145  
asked him whether he had any friends where he was going, he replied “he *had* no friends.”

These pleasant, and some mournful passages with the first

sight of the sea, co-operating with youth, and a sense of holi-  
 150 days, and out-of-door adventure, to me that had been pent up  
 in populous cities for many months before,—have left upon  
 my mind the fragrance as of summer days gone by, bequeath-  
 ing nothing but their remembrance for cold and wintry hours  
 to chew upon.

155 Will it be thought a digression (it may spare some un-  
 welcome comparisons), if I endeavour to account for the  
*dissatisfaction* which I have heard so many persons confess  
 to have felt (as I did myself feel in part on this occasion),  
*at the sight of the sea for the first time?* I think the  
 160 reason usually given—referring to the incapacity of actual  
 objects for satisfying our preconceptions of them—scarcely  
 goes deep enough into the question. Let the same person  
 see a lion, an elephant, a mountain, for the first time in  
 his life, and he shall perhaps feel himself a little mortified.  
 165 The things do not fill up the space, which the idea of them  
 seemed to take up in his mind. But they have still a  
 correspondency to his first notion, and in time grow up  
 to it, so as to produce a very similar impression · enlarging  
 themselves (if I may say so) upon familiarity. But the  
 170 sea remains a disappointment.—Is it not, that in *the*  
*latter* we had expected to behold (absurdly, I grant, but, I  
 am afraid, by the law of imagination, unavoidable) not a  
 definite object, as those wild beasts, or that mountain com-  
 passable by the eye, but *all the sea at once*, THE COMMENSURATE  
 175 ANTAGONIST OF THE EARTH? I do not say we tell ourselves  
 so much, but the craving of the mind is to be satisfied with  
 nothing less. I will suppose the case of a young person of  
 fifteen (as I then was) knowing nothing of the sea, but from  
 description. He comes to it for the first time—all that he  
 180 has been reading of it all his life, and *that* the most enthusi-  
 astic part of life,—all he has gathered from narratives of  
 wandering seamen,—what he has gained from true voyages,  
 and what he cherishes as credulously from romance and  
 poetry,—crowding their images, and exacting strange tributes  
 185 from expectation.—He thinks of the great deep, and of  
 those who go down unto it; of its thousand isles, and of

the vast continents it washes; of its receiving the mighty Plate, or Orellana, into its bosom, without disturbance, or sense of augmentation; of Biscay swells, and the mariner

For many a day, and many a dreadful night, 190  
Incessant labouring round the stormy Cape;

of fatal rocks, and the "still-vexed Bermoothes;" of great whirlpools, and the water-spout; of sunken ships, and sunless treasures swallowed up in the unrestoring depths; of fishes and quaint monsters, to which all that is terrible on earth— 195

Be but as buggs to frighten babes withal,  
Compared with the creatures in the sea's entral;

of naked savages, and Juan Fernandez; of pearls, and shells; of coral beds, and of enchanted isles; of mermaids' grotts—

I do not assert that in sober earnest he expects to be 200 shown all these wonders at once, but he is under the tyranny of a mighty faculty, which haunts him with confused hints and shadows of all these; and when the actual object opens first upon him, seen (in tame weather, too, most likely) from our unromantic coasts—a speck, a slip of sea-water, as it 205 shows to him—what can it prove but a very unsatisfying and even diminutive entertainment? Or if he has come to it from the mouth of a river, was it much more than the river widening? and, even out of sight of land, what had he but a flat watery horizon about him, nothing comparable to the 210 vast o'er-curtaining sky, his familiar object, seen daily without dread or amazement?—Who, in similar circumstances, has not been tempted to exclaim with Charoba, in the poem of Gebir—

Is this the mighty ocean? is this *all*? 215

I love town, or country; but this detestable Cinque Port is neither. I hate these scrubbed shoots, thrusting out their starved foliage from between the horrid fissures of dusty innutritious rocks; which the amateur calls "verdure to the edge of the sea." I require woods, and they show me 220 stunted coppices. I cry out for the water-brooks, and pant for fresh streams, and inland murmurs. I cannot stand all day on the naked beach, watching the capricious hues of the

sea, shifting like the colours of a dying mullet. I am tired of looking out at the windows of this island-prison. I would  
225 fain retire into the interior of my cage. While I gaze upon the sea, I want to be on it, over it, across it. It binds me in with chains, as of iron. My thoughts are abroad. I should not so feel in Staffordshire. There is no home for me here. There is no sense of home at Hastings. It is a place of fugi-  
230 tive resort, an heterogeneous assemblage of sea-mews and stock-brokers, Amphitrites of the town, and misses that coquet with the Ocean. If it were what it was in its primitive shape, and what it ought to have remained, a fair, honest, fishing-town, and no more, it were something—with  
235 a few straggling fishermen's huts scattered about, artless as its cliffs, and with their materials filched from them, it were something. I could abide to dwell with Meshech; to assort with fisher-swains, and smugglers. There are, or I dream there are, many of this latter occupation here. Their faces  
240 become the place. I like a smuggler. He is the only honest thief. He robs nothing but the revenue,—an abstraction I never greatly cared about. I could go out with them in their mackarel boats, or about their less ostensible business, with some satisfaction. I can even tolerate those poor victims  
245 to monotony, who from day to day pace along the beach, in endless progress and recurrence, to watch their illicit countrymen—townsfolk or brethren perchance—whistling to the sheathing and unsheathing of their cutlasses (their only solace), who under the mild name of preventive service,  
250 keep up a legitimated civil warfare in the deplorable absence of a foreign one, to show their detestation of run hollands, and zeal for old England. But it is the visitants from town, that come here to *say* that they have been here, with no more relish of the sea than a pond-perch or a dace might be sup-  
255 posed to have, that are my aversion. I feel like a foolish dace in these regions, and have as little toleration for myself here, as for them. What can they want here? if they had a true relish of the ocean, why have they brought all this land luggage with them? or why pitch their civilised  
260 tents in the desert? What mean these scanty book-rooms—



marine libraries as they entitle them—if the sea were, as they would have us believe, a book, “to read strange matter in?” what are their foolish concert-rooms, if they come, as they would fain be thought to do, to listen to the music of the waves? All is false and hollow pretension. 265 They come, because it is the fashion, and to spoil the nature of the place. They are, mostly, as I have said, stock-brokers; but I have watched the better sort of them—now and then, an honest citizen (of the old stamp), in the simplicity of his heart, shall bring down his wife and daughters, to taste the 270 sea breezes. I always know the date of their arrival. It is easy to see it in their countenance. A day or two they go wandering on the shingles, picking up cockle-shells, and thinking them great things; but, in a poor week, imagination slackens: they begin to discover that cockles produce no 275 pearls, and then—O then!—if I could interpret for the pretty creatures (I know they have not the courage to confess it themselves), how gladly would they exchange their sea-side rambles for a Sunday-walk on the green-sward of their accustomed Twickenham meadows! 280

I would ask of one of these sea-charmed emigrants, who think they truly love the sea, with its wild usages, what would their feelings be, if some of the unsophisticated aborigines of this place, encouraged by their courteous questionings here, should venture, on the faith of such assured 285 sympathy between them, to return the visit, and come up to see—London. I must imagine them with their fishing-tackle on their back, as we carry our town necessaries. What a sensation would it cause in Lothbury. What vehement laughter would it not excite among 290

The daughters of Cheapside, and wives of Lombard-street!

I am sure that no town-bred or inland-born subjects can feel their true and natural nourishment at these sea-places. Nature, where she does not mean us for mariners and vagabonds, bids us stay at home. The salt foam seems to nourish a spleen. 295 I am not half so good-natured as by the milder waters of my natural river. I would exchange these sea-gulls for swans, and scud a swallow for ever about the banks of Thamesis.

## THE SUPERANNUATED MAN

Sera tamen respexit  
Libertas. VIRGIL.

A Clerk I was in London gay.  
O'KEEFE.

IF peradventure, Reader, it has been thy lot to waste the golden years of thy life—thy shining youth—in the irksome confinement of an office; to have thy prison days prolonged through middle age down to decrepitude and silver hairs, without hope of release or respite; to have lived to forget that there are such things as holidays, or to remember them but as the prerogatives of childhood; then, and then only, will you be able to appreciate my deliverance.

It is now six-and-thirty years since I took my seat at the desk in Mincing-lane. Melancholy was the transition at fourteen from the abundant playtime, and the frequently-intervening vacations of school days, to the eight, nine, and sometimes ten hours' a-day attendance at the counting-house. But time partially reconciles us to anything. I gradually became content—doggedly contented, as wild animals in cages.

It is true I had my Sundays to myself; but Sundays, admirable as the institution of them is for purposes of worship, are for that very reason the very worst adapted for days of unbending and recreation. In particular, there is a gloom for me attendant upon a city Sunday, a weight in the air. I miss the cheerful cries of London, the music, and the ballad-singers—the buzz and stirring murmur of the streets. Those eternal bells depress me. The closed shops repel me. Prints, pictures, all the glittering and endless succession of knacks and gewgaws, and ostentatiously displayed wares of

tradesmen, which make a week-day saunter through the less busy parts of the metropolis so delightful—are shut out. No book-stalls deliciously to idle over—no busy faces to recreate the idle man who contemplates them ever passing 30 by—the very face of business a charm by contrast to his temporary relaxation from it. Nothing to be seen but unhappy countenances—or half-happy at best—of emancipated apprentices and little tradesfolks, with here and there a servant-maid that has got leave to go out, who, slaving all 35 the week, with the habit has lost almost the capacity of enjoying a free hour; and lively expressing the hollowness of a day's pleasuring. The very strollers in the fields on that day look anything but comfortable.

But besides Sundays I had a day at Easter, and a day at 40 Christmas, with a full week in the summer to go and air myself in my native fields of Hertfordshire. This last was a great indulgence; and the prospect of its recurrence, I believe, alone kept me up through the year, and made my 45 lurance tolerable. But when the week came round, did the glittering phantom of the distance keep touch with me? or rather was it not a series of seven uneasy days, spent in restless pursuit of pleasure, and a wearisome anxiety to find out how to make the most of them? Where was the quiet, where the promised rest? Before I had a taste of it, it was 50 vanished. I was at the desk again, counting upon the fifty-one tedious weeks that must intervene before such another snatch would come. Still the prospect of its coming threw something of an illumination upon the darker side of my captivity. Without it, as I have said, I could scarcely have 55 sustained my thralldom.

Independently of the rigours of attendance, I have ever been haunted with a sense (perhaps a mere caprice) of incapacity for business. This, during my latter years, had increased to such a degree, that it was visible in all the lines 60 of my countenance. My health and my good spirits flagged. I had perpetually a dread of some crisis, to which I should be found unequal. Besides my daylight servitude, I served over again all night in my sleep, and would awake with

65 terrors of imaginary false entries, errors in my accounts, and the like. I was fifty years of age, and no prospect of emancipation presented itself. I had grown to my desk, as it were; and the wood had entered into my soul.

My fellows in the office would sometimes rally me upon  
70 the trouble legible in my countenance; but I did not know that it had raised the suspicions of any of my employers, when, on the fifth of last month, a day ever to be remembered by me, L——, the junior partner in the firm, calling me on one side, directly taxed me with my bad looks, and  
75 frankly inquired the cause of them. So taxed, I honestly made confession of my infirmity, and added that I was afraid I should eventually be obliged to resign his service. He spoke some words of course to hearten me, and there the matter rested. A whole week I remained labouring  
80 under the impression that I had acted imprudently in my disclosure; that I had foolishly given a handle against myself, and had been anticipating my own dismissal. A week passed in this manner, the most anxious one, I verily believe, in my whole life, when on the evening of the 12th  
85 of April, just as I was about quitting my desk to go home (it might be about 8 o'clock) I received an awful summons to attend the presence of the whole assembled firm in the formidable back parlour. I thought now my time is surely come; I have done for myself; I am going to be told that  
90 they have no longer occasion for me. L——, I could see, smiled at the terror I was in, which was a little relief to me—when, to my utter astonishment, B——, the eldest partner, began a formal harangue to me on the length of my services, my very meritorious conduct during the whole of  
95 the time (the deuce, thought I, how did he find out that? I protest I never had the confidence to think as much). He went on to descant on the expediency of retiring at a certain time of life (how my heart panted!), and asking me a few questions as to the amount of my own property, of which I  
100 have a little, ended with a proposal, to which his three partners nodded a grave assent, that I should accept from the house, which I had served so well, a pension for life to

the amount of two-thirds of my accustomed salary—a magnificent offer! I do not know what I answered between surprise and gratitude, but it was understood that I accepted their proposal, and I was told that I was free from that hour to leave their service. I stammered out a bow, and at just a few minutes after eight I went home—for ever. This noble benefit—gratitude forbids me to conceal their names—I owe to the kindness of the most munificent firm in the world—the house of Boldero, Merryweather, Bosanquet, and Lacy.

*Esto Perpetua!*

For the first day or two I felt stunned, overwhelmed. I could only apprehend my felicity; I was too confused to taste it sincerely. I wandered about, thinking I was happy, and knowing that I was not. I was in the condition of a prisoner in the old Bastille, suddenly let loose after a forty years' confinement. I could scarce trust myself with myself. It was like passing out of Time into Eternity—for it is a sort of Eternity for a man to have his Time all to himself. It seemed to me that I had more time on my hands than I could ever manage. From a poor man, poor in Time, I was suddenly lifted up into a vast revenue; I could see no end of my possessions; I wanted some steward, or judicious bailiff, to manage my estates in Time for me. And here let me caution persons grown old in active business, not lightly, nor without weighing their own resources, to forego their customary employment all at once, for there may be danger in it. I feel it by myself, but I know that my resources are sufficient; and now that those first giddy raptures have subsided, I have a quiet home-feeling of the blessedness of my condition. I am in no hurry. Having all holidays, I am as though I had none. If Time hung heavy upon me, I could walk it away; but I do *not* walk all day long, as I used to do in those old transient holidays, thirty miles a day, to make the most of them. If Time were troublesome, I could read it away; but I do *not* read in that violent measure, with which, having no time my own but candle-light Time, I used to weary out my head and eyesight in by-gone winters.

140 I walk, read, or scribble (as now), just when the fit se  
me. I no longer hunt after pleasure: I let it come to  
I am like the man

—————that's born, and has his years come to him,  
In some green desert.

145 "Years!" you will say; "what is this superannua  
simpleton calculating upon? He has already told us he  
past fifty."

I have indeed lived nominally fifty years, but deduct  
of them the hours which I have lived to other people, a  
150 not to myself, and you will find me still a young fello  
For *that* is the only true Time, which a man can prop  
call his own, that which he has all to himself; the re  
though in some sense he may be said to live it, is oth  
people's Time, not his. The remnant of my poor days, lo  
155 or short, is at least multiplied for me threefold. My t  
next years, if I stretch so far, will be as long as any preced  
ing thirty. 'Tis a fair rule-of-three sum.

Among the strange fantasies which beset me at the co  
mencement of my freedom, and of which all traces are n  
160 yet gone, one was, that a vast tract of time had intervenc  
since I quitted the Counting-house. I could not conceive  
it as an affair of yesterday. The partners, and the cler  
with whom I had for so many years, and for so many hou  
in each day of the year, been closely associated—being su  
165 dently removed from them—they seemed as dead to m  
There is a fine passage which may serve to illustrate th  
fancy, in a Tragedy by Sir Robert Howard, speaking of  
friend's death.

—————'T was but just now he went away ;  
170 I have not since had time to shed a tear ;  
And yet the distance does the same appear,  
As if he had been a thousand years from me.  
Time takes no measure in Eternity.

To dissipate this awkward feeling, I have been fain to g  
175 among them once or twice since; to visit my old desk  
fellows—my co-brethren of the quill—that I had left below  
in the state militant. Not all the kindness with which they

received me could quite restore to me that pleasant familiarity, which I had heretofore enjoyed among them. We cracked some of our old jokes, but methought they went off but faintly. My old desk; the peg where I hung my hat were appropriated to another. I knew it must be, but I could not take it kindly. D——I take me, if I did not feel some remorse—beast, if I had not—at quitting my old compeers, the faithful partners of my toils for six-and-thirty years, that smoothed for me with their jokes and conundrums the ruggedness of my professional road. Had it been so rugged then, after all? or was I a coward simply? Well, it is too late to repent; and I also know that these suggestions are a common fallacy of the mind on such occasions. But my heart smote me. I had violently broken the bands betwixt us. It was at least not courteous. I shall be some time before I get quite reconciled to the separation. Farewell, old cronies, yet not for long, for again and again I will come among ye, if I shall have your leave. Farewell, Ch——, dry, sarcastic, and friendly! Do——, mild, slow to move, and gentlemanly! Pl——, officious to do, and to volunteer, good services!—and thou, thou dreary pile, fit mansion for a Gresham or a Whittington of old, stately house of Merchants; with thy labyrinthine passages, and light-excluding, pent-up offices, where candles for one-half the year supplied the place of the sun's light; unhealthy contributor to my weal, stern fosterer of my living, farewell! In thee remain, and not in the obscure collection of some wandering bookseller, my “works!” There let them rest, as I do from my labours, piled on thy massy shelves, more MSS. in folio than ever Aquinas left, and full as useful! My mantle I bequeath among ye.

A fortnight has passed since the date of my first communication. At that period I was approaching to tranquillity, but had not reached it. I boasted of a calm indeed, but it was comparative only. Something of the first flutter was left; an unsettling sense of novelty; the dazzle to weak eyes of unaccustomed light. I missed my old chains, forsooth, as if they had been some necessary part of my

apparel. I was a poor Carthusian, from strict cellular discipline suddenly by some revolution returned upon the world. I am now as if I had never been other than my own master. It is natural to me to go where I please, to do what I please. I find myself at 11 o'clock in the day in Bond-street, and it seems to me that I have been sauntering there at that very hour for years past. I digress into Soho, to explore a bookstall. Methinks I have been thirty years a collector. There is nothing strange nor new in it. I find myself before a fine picture in the morning. Was it ever otherwise? What is become of Fish-street Hill? Where is Fenchurch-street? Stones of old Mincing Lane, which I have worn with my daily pilgrimage for six-and-thirty years, to the footsteps of what toil-worn clerk are your everlasting flints now vocal? I indent the gayer flags of Pall Mall. It is 'Change time, and I am strangely among the Elgin marbles. It was no hyperbole when I ventured to compare the change in my condition to a passing into another world. Time stands still in a manner to me. I have lost all distinction of season. I do not know the day of the week or of the month. Each day used to be individually felt by me in its reference to the foreign post days; in its distance from, or propinquity to, the next Sunday. I had my Wednesday feelings, my Saturday nights' sensations. The genius of each day was upon me distinctly during the whole of it, affecting my appetite, spirits, etc. The phantom of the next day, with the dreary five to follow, sate as a load upon my poor Sabbath recreations. What charm has washed that Ethiop white? What is gone of Black Monday? All days are the same. Sunday itself—that unfortunate failure of a holiday, as it too often proved, what with my sense of its fugitiveness, and over-care to get the greatest quantity of pleasure out of it—is melted down into a week-day. I can spare to go to church now, without grudging the huge cantle which it used to seem to cut out of the holiday. I have time for everything. I can visit a sick friend. I can interrupt the man of much occupation when he is busiest. I can insult over him with an invitation



o take a day's pleasure with me to Windsor this fine May-morning. It is Lucretian pleasure to behold the poor 255  
 drudges, whom I have left behind in the world, carking and  
 aring; like horses in a mill, drudging on in the small  
 eternal round—and what is it all for? A man can never  
 have too much Time to himself, nor too little to do. Had I  
 a little son, I would christen him NOTHING-TO-DO; he should 260  
 do nothing. Man, I verily believe, is out of his element  
 as long as he is operative. I am altogether for the life  
 contemplative. Will no kindly earthquake come and  
 swallow up those accursed cotton-mills? Take me that  
 lumber of a desk there, and bowl it down 265

As low as to the fiends.

I am no longer \*\*\*\*\*, clerk to the Firm of, &c. I am  
 Retired Leisure. I am to be met with in trim gardens. I am  
 already come to be known by my vacant face and careless  
 gesture, perambulating at no fixed pace, nor with any settled 270  
 purpose. I walk about; not to and from. They tell me a  
 certain *cum dignitate* air, that has been buried so long with  
 my other good parts, has begun to shoot forth in my person.  
 I grow into gentility perceptibly. When I take up a  
 newspaper, it is to read the state of the opera. *Opus* 275  
*operatum est*. I have done all that I came into this world  
 to do. I have worked task-work, and have the rest of the  
 day to myself.

## DREAM-CHILDREN: A REVERIE

CHILDREN love to listen to stories about their elders, when *they* were children; to stretch their imagination to the conception of a traditionary great-uncle or grandame, whom they never saw. It was in this spirit that my little  
5 ones crept about me the other evening to hear about their great-grandmother Field, who lived in a great house in Norfolk (a hundred times bigger than that in which they and papa lived), which had been the scene—so at least it was generally believed in that part of the country—of the  
10 tragic incidents which they had lately become familiar with from the ballad of the Children in the Wood. Certain it is that the whole story of the children and their cruel uncle was to be seen fairly carved out in wood upon the chimney-piece of the great hall, the whole story down to the Robin  
15 Redbreasts; till a foolish rich person pulled it down to set up a marble one of modern invention in its stead, with no story upon it. Here Alice put out one of her dear mother's looks, too tender to be called upbraiding. Then I went on to say, how religious and how good their great-grandmother  
20 Field was, how beloved and respected by everybody, though she was not indeed the mistress of this great house, but had only the charge of it (and yet in some respects she might be said to be the mistress of it too) committed to her by the owner, who preferred living in a newer and more fashionable  
25 mansion which he had purchased somewhere in the adjoining county; but still she lived in it in a manner as if it had been her own, and kept up the dignity of the great house in a sort while she lived, which afterwards came to decay, and

was nearly pulled down, and all its old ornaments stripped and carried away to the owner's other house, where they were set up, and looked as awkward as if some one were to carry away the old tombs they had seen lately at the Abbey, and stick them up in Lady C.'s tawdry gilt drawing-room. Here John smiled, as much as to say, "that would be foolish indeed." And then I told how, when she came to die, her funeral was attended by a concourse of all the poor, and some of the gentry too, of the neighbourhood for many miles round, to show their respect for her memory, because she had been such a good and religious woman; so good indeed that she knew all the Psalter by heart, ay, and a great part of the Testament besides. Here little Alice spread her hands. Then I told what a tall, upright, graceful person their great-grandmother Field once was; and how in her youth she was esteemed the best dancer—here Alice's little right foot played an involuntary movement, till, upon my looking grave, it desisted—the best dancer, I was saying, in the county, till a cruel disease, called a cancer, came, and bowed her down with pain; but it could never bend her good spirits, or make them stoop, but they were still upright, because she was so good and religious. Then I told how she was used to sleep by herself in a lone chamber of the great one house; and how she believed that an apparition of two infants was to be seen at midnight gliding up and down the great staircase near where she slept, but she said "those innocents would do her no harm"; and how frightened I used to be, though in those days I had my maid to sleep with me, because I was never half so good or religious as she—and yet I never saw the infants. Here John expanded all his eyebrows and tried to look courageous. Then I told how good she was to all her grandchildren, having us to the great house in the holidays, where I in particular used to spend many hours by myself, in gazing upon the old busts of the twelve Cæsars, that had been Emperors of Rome, till the old marble heads would seem to live again, or I to be turned into marble with them; how I never could be tired with roaming about that huge mansion, with its vast empty

rooms, with their worn-out hangings, fluttering tapestry, and carved oaken panels, with the gilding almost rubbed out—sometimes in the spacious old-fashioned gardens, which I had almost to myself, unless when now and then a solitary gardening man would cross me—and how the nectarines and peaches hung upon the walls, without my ever offering to pluck them, because they were forbidden fruit, unless now and then,—and because I had more pleasure in strolling about among the old melancholy-looking yew-trees, or the firs, and picking up the red berries, and the fir-apples, which were good for nothing but to look at—or in lying about upon the fresh grass with all the fine garden smells around me—or basking in the orangery, till I could almost fancy myself ripening too along with the oranges and the limes in that grateful warmth—or in watching the dace that darted to and fro in the fish-pond, at the bottom of the garden, with here and there a great sulky pike hanging midway down the water in silent state, as if it mocked at their impertinent friskings,—I had more pleasure in these busy-idle diversions than in all the sweet flavours of peaches, nectarines, oranges, and such-like common baits of children. Here John slyly deposited back upon the plate a bunch of grapes, which, not unobserved by Alice, he had meditated dividing with her, and both seemed willing to relinquish them for the present as irrelevant. Then, in somewhat a more heightened tone, I told how, though their great-grandmother Field loved all her grandchildren, yet in an especial manner she might be said to love their uncle, John L——, because he was so handsome and spirited a youth, and a king to the rest of us; and, instead of moping about in solitary corners, like some of us, he would mount the most mettlesome horse he could get, when but an imp no bigger than themselves, and make it carry him half over the county in a morning, and join the hunters when there were any out—and yet he loved the old great house and gardens too, but had too much spirit to be always pent up within their boundaries—and how their uncle grew up to man's estate as brave as he was handsome, to the admiration of everybody,

out of their great-grandmother Field most especially ; and 105  
now he used to carry me upon his back when I was a lame-  
footed boy—for he was a good bit older than me—many a  
mile when I could not walk for pain ;—and how in after  
life he became lame-footed too, and I did not always (I fear)  
make allowances enough for him when he was impatient, 110  
and in pain, nor remember sufficiently how considerate he  
had been to me when I was lame-footed ; and how when he  
died, though he had not been dead an hour, it seemed as if  
he had died a great while ago, such a distance there is  
betwixt life and death ; and how I bore his death as I 115  
thought pretty well at first, but afterwards it haunted and  
haunted me ; and though I did not cry or take it to heart as  
some do, and as I think he would have done if I had died,  
yet I missed him all day long, and knew not till then how  
much I had loved him. I missed his kindness, and I missed 120  
his crossness, and wished him to be alive again, to be  
quarrelling with him (for we quarrelled sometimes), rather  
than not have him again, and was as uneasy without him, as  
he their poor uncle must have been when the doctor took off  
his limb.—Here the children fell a crying, and asked if their 125  
little mourning which they had on was not for uncle John,  
and they looked up, and prayed me not to go on about their  
uncle, but to tell them some stories about their pretty dead  
mother. Then I told how for seven long years, in hope  
sometimes, sometimes in despair, yet persisting ever, I 130  
courted the fair Alice W——n ; and, as much as children  
could understand, I explained to them what coyness, and  
difficulty, and denial, meant in maidens—when suddenly,  
turning to Alice, the soul of the first Alice looked out at her  
eyes with such a reality of re-presentment, that I became in 135  
doubt which of them stood there before me, or whose that  
bright hair was ; and while I stood gazing, both the children  
gradually grew fainter o my view, receding, and still re-  
ceding, till nothing at last but two mournful features were  
seen in the uttermost distance, which, without speech, 140  
strangely impressed upon me the effects of speech : “ We  
are not of Alice, nor of thee, nor are we children at all.

The children of Alice call Bartrum father. We are nothing; less than nothing, and dreams. We are only what might  
145 have been, and must wait upon the tedious shores of Lethe millions of ages before we have existence, and a name"—and immediately awaking, I found myself quietly seated in my bachelor arm-chair, where I had fallen asleep, with the faithful Bridget unchanged by my side—but John L. (or  
150 James Elia) was gone for ever.

## A CHARACTER OF THE LATE ELIA

BY A FRIEND.

THIS gentleman, who for some months past had been in a declining way, hath at length paid his final tribute to Nature. He just lived long enough (it was what he wished) to see his papers collected into a volume. The pages of the *London Magazine* will henceforth know him no more. 5

Exactly at twelve, last night, his queer spirit departed; and the bells of Saint Bride's rang him out with the old year. The mournful vibrations were caught in the dining-room of his friends T. and H.; and the company, assembled here to welcome in another 1st of January, checked their arousals in mid-earth, and were silent. Janus wept. The gentle P—r, in a whisper, signified his intention of devoting an elegy; and Allan C., nobly forgetful of his countrymen's wrongs, vowed a memoir to his *manes*, full and friendly, as a *Tale of Lyddalcross*. 15

To say truth, it is time he were gone. The humour of the thing, if there was ever much in it, was pretty well exhausted; and a two years and a half's existence has been a tolerable duration for a phantom.

I am now at liberty to confess, that much which I have heard objected to my late friend's writings was well founded. Crude they are, I grant you,—a sort of unlicked, incondite things,—villanously pranked in an affected array of antique modes and phrases. They had not been *his* if they had been other than such; and better it is that a writer should be natural in a self-pleasing quaintness, than to affect a naturalness (so called) that should be strange to him. 25

Egotistical they have been pronounced by some who did not know that what he tells us as of himself was often true only (historically) of another; as in his Third Essay, (to save many instances,) where, under the *first person*, (his favourite figure,) he shadows forth the forlorn estate of a country boy placed at a London school, far from his friends and connections,—in direct opposition to his own early history. If it be egotism to imply and twine with his own identity the griefs and affections of another,—making himself many, or reducing many unto himself,—then is the skilful novelist, who all along brings in his hero or heroine, speaking of themselves, the greatest egotist of all; who yet has never, therefore, been accused of that narrowness. And how shall the intenser dramatist escape being faulty, who doubtless, under cover of passion uttered by another, oftentimes gives blameless vent to his most inward feelings, and expresses his own story modestly?

My late friend was in many respects a singular character. Those who did not like him hated him; and some, who once liked him, afterwards became his bitterest haters. The truth is, he gave himself too little concern about what he uttered, and in whose presence. He observed neither time nor place, and would ever out with what came uppermost. With the severe religionist he would pass for a free-thinker; while the other faction set him down for a bigot, or persuaded themselves that he belied his sentiments. Few understood him; and I am not certain that at all times he quite understood himself. He too much affected that dangerous figure,—irony. He sowed doubtful speeches, and reaped plain, unequivocal hatred. He would interrupt the gravest discussion with some light jest; and yet, perhaps, not quite irrelevant in ears that could understand it. Your long and much talkers hated him. The informal habit of his mind, joined to an inveterate impediment of speech, forbade him to be an orator; and he seemed determined that no one else should play that part when he was present. He was *petit* and ordinary in his person and appearance. I have seen him sometimes in what is called good company, but, where he



has been a stranger, sit silent, and be suspected for an odd fellow, till (some unlucky occasion provoking it) he would stutter out some senseless pun, (not altogether senseless perhaps, if rightly taken,) which has stamped his character for the evening. It was hit or miss with him; but, nine 70 times out of ten, he contrived by this device to send away a whole company his enemies. His conceptions rose kindlier than his utterance, and his happiest *impromptus* had the appearance of effort. He has been accused of trying to be witty, when in truth he was but struggling to give his poor 75 thoughts articulation. He chose his companions for some individuality of character which they manifested. Hence not many persons of science, and few professed *literati*, were of his councils. They were, for the most part, persons of an uncertain fortune; and as to such people, commonly, 80 nothing is more obnoxious than a gentleman of settled (though moderate) income, he passed with most of them for a great miser. To my knowledge, this was a mistake. His *intimados*, to confess a truth, were, in the world's eye, a ragged regiment. He found them floating on the surface of 85 society; and the colour, or something else, in the weed, pleased him. The burs stuck to him; but they were good and loving burs for all that. He never greatly cared for the society of what are called good people. If any of these were scandalised, (and offences were sure to arise,) he could 90 not help it. When he has been remonstrated with for not making more concessions to the feelings of good people, he would retort by asking, What one point did these good people ever concede to him? He was temperate in his meals and diversions, but always kept a little on this side of 95 abstemiousness. Only in the use of the Indian weed he might be thought a little excessive. He took it, he would say, as a solvent of speech. Marry—as the friendly vapour ascended, how his prattle would curl up sometimes with it! the ligaments, which tongue-tied him, were loosened, and 100 the stammerer proceeded a statish!

I do not know whether I ought to bemoan or rejoice that my old friend is departed. His jests were beginning to grow

obsolete, and his stories to be found out. He felt the  
105 approaches of age; and, while he pretended to cling to life,  
you saw how slender were the ties left to bind him. Dis-  
coursing with him latterly on this subject, he expressed  
himself with a pettishness which I thought unworthy of  
him. In our walks about his suburban retreat (as he called  
110 it) at Shacklewell, some children belonging to a School of  
Industry met us, and bowed and courtesied, as he thought  
in an especial manner to *him*. "They take me for a visiting  
governor," he muttered earnestly. He had a horror, which  
he carried to a foible, of looking like any thing important  
115 and parochial. He thought that he approached nearer to  
that stamp daily. He had a general aversion from being  
treated like a grave or respectable character, and kept a  
wary eye upon the advances of age that should so entitle him.  
He herded always, while it was possible, with people  
120 younger than himself. He did not conform to the march  
of time, but was dragged along in the procession. His  
manners lagged behind his years. He was too much of the  
boy-man. The *toga virilis* never sat gracefully on his  
shoulders. The impressions of infancy had burnt into  
125 him, and he resented the impertinence of manhood. These  
were weaknesses; but such as they were, they are a key to  
explicate some of his writings.

He left little property behind him. Of course, the little  
that is left (chiefly in India bonds) devolves upon his cousin  
130 Bridget. A few critical dissertations were found in his  
*escritoire*, which have been handed over to the editor of this  
magazine, in which it is to be hoped they will shortly  
appear, retaining his accustomed signature.

He has himself not obscurely hinted that his employ-  
135 ment lay in a public office. The gentlemen in the export  
department of the East-India House will forgive me if I  
acknowledge the readiness with which they assisted me in  
the retrieval of his few manuscripts. They pointed out in a  
most obliging manner the desk at which he had been planted  
140 for forty years; showed me ponderous tomes of figures,  
in his own remarkably neat hand, which, more properly

than his few printed tracts, might be called his "Works." They seemed affectionate to his memory, and universally commended his expertness in book-keeping. It seems he was the inventor of some ledger which should combine the 145 precision and certainty of the Italian double entry (I think they called it) with the brevity and facility of some newer German system; but I am not able to appreciate the worth of the discovery. I have often heard him express a warm regard for his associates in office, and how fortunate he 150 considered himself in having his lot thrown in amongst them. There is more sense, more discourse, more shrewdness, and even talent, among these clerks, (he would say,) than in twice the number of authors by profession that I have conversed with. He would brighten up sometimes upon 155 the "old days of the India House," when he consorted with Woodroffe and Wissett, and Peter Corbet (a descendant and worthy representative, bating the point of sanctity, of old facetious Bishop Corbet); and Hoole, who translated Tasso; and Bartlemy Brown, whose father (God assoil him 160 therefore!) modernized Walton; and sly, warm-hearted old Jack Cole, (King Cole they called him in those days,) and Campe and Fombelle, and a world of choice spirits, more than I can remember to name, who associated in those days with Jack Burrell (the *bon vivant* of the South-Sea House); 165 and little Eyton, (said to be a *fac-simile* of Pope,—he was a miniature of a gentleman,) that was cashier under him; and Dan Voight of the Custom House, that left the famous library.

Well, Elia is gone,—for aught I know, to be reunited 170 with them,—and these poor traces of his pen are all we have to show for it. How little survives of the wordiest authors! Of all they said or did in their lifetime, a few glittering words only! His Essays found some favourers, as they appeared separately. They shuffled their way in 175 the crowd singly: how they will *read*, now they are brought together, is a question for the publishers, who have thus ventured to draw out into one piece his "weaved-up follies."

PHIL-ELIA.

## IMPERFECT SYMPATHIES

I am of a constitution so general, that it consorts and sympathiseth with all things; I have no antipathy, or rather idiosyncrasy in any thing. Those natural repugnancies do not touch me, nor do I behold with prejudice the French, Italian, Spaniard, or Dutch.—*Religio Medici*.

THAT the author of the *Religio Medici*, mounted upon the airy stilts of abstraction, conversant about notional and conjectural essences; in whose categories of Being the possible took the upper hand of the actual; should have overlooked the impertinent individualities of such poor concretions as mankind, is not much to be admired. It is rather to be wondered at, that in the genus of animals he should have condescended to distinguish that species at all. For myself—earth-bound and fettered to the scene of my activities,—

Standing on earth, not rapt above the sky,

I confess that I do feel the differences of mankind, national or individual, to an unhealthy excess. I can look with no indifferent eye upon things or persons. Whatever is, is to me a matter of taste or distaste; or when once it becomes indifferent, it begins to be disrelishing. I am, in plainer words, a bundle of prejudices—made up of likings and dislikings—the veriest thrall to sympathies, apathies, antipathies. In a certain sense, I hope it may be said of me that I am a lover of my species. I can feel for all indifferently, but I cannot feel towards all equally. The more purely-English word that expresses sympathy, will better explain my meaning. I can be a friend to a worthy man, who upon another

ccount cannot be my mate or *fellow*. I cannot *like* all  
eople alike.\* 25

I have been trying all my life to like Scotchmen, and am  
bliged to desist from the experiment in despair. They  
annot like me—and in truth, I never knew one of that  
ation who attempted to do it. There is something more  
lain and ingenuous in their mode of proceeding. We know 30  
ne another at first sight. There is an order of imperfect  
ntelleets (under which mine must be content to rank) which  
its constitution is essentially anti-Caledonian. The owners  
f the sort of faculties I allude to, have minds rather  
aggestive than comprehensive. They have no pretences to 35  
uch clearness or precision in their ideas, or in their manner  
f expressing them. Their intellectual wardrobe (to confess  
irly) has few whole pieces in it. They are content with  
ragments and scattered pieces of Truth. She presents no  
ll front to them—a feature or side-face at the most. Hints 40  
ad glimpses, germs and crude essays at a system, is the  
most they pretend to. They beat up a little game peradven-

\* I would be understood as confining myself to the subject of  
*imperfect sympathies*. To nations or classes of men there can be no direct  
ntipathy. There may be individuals born and constellated so opposite  
o another individual nature, that the same sphere cannot hold them.  
have met with my moral antipodes, and can believe the story of two  
ersons meeting (who never saw one another before in their lives) and  
stantly fighting.

—————We by proof find there should be  
’Twixt man and man such an antipathy,  
That though he can show no just reason why  
For any former wrong or injury,  
Can neither find a blemish in his fame,  
Nor ought in face or feature justly blame,  
Can challenge or accuse him of no evil,  
Yet notwithstanding, hates him as a devil.

he lines are from old Heywood’s “*Hierarchie of Angels*,” and he  
bjoins a curious story in confirmation, of a Spaniard who attempted  
o assassinate a King Ferdinand of Spain, and being put to the rack,  
uld give no other reason for the deed but an inveterate antipathy  
hich he had taken to the first sight of the King.

—————The cause which to that act compell’d him  
Was, he ne’er loved him since he first beheld him.

ture—and leave it to knottier heads, more robust constitutions to run it down. The light that lights them is not steady and  
45 polar, but mutable and shifting: waxing, and again waning. Their conversation is accordingly. They will throw out a random word in or out of season, and be content to let it pass for what it is worth. They cannot speak always as if they were upon their oath—but must be understood, speaking  
50 or writing, with some abatement. They seldom wait to mature a proposition, but e'en bring it to market in the green ear. They delight to impart their defective discoveries as they arise, without waiting for their full development. They are no systematizers, and would but err more by attempting it. Their minds, as I said before, are suggestive  
55 merely. The brain of a true Caledonian (if I am not mistaken) is constituted upon quite a different plan. His Minerva is born in panoply. You are never admitted to see his ideas in their growth—if, indeed, they do grow, and are not rather put together upon principles of clock-work. You never catch his mind in an undress. He never hints or suggests anything, but unlades his stock of ideas in perfect order and completeness. He brings his total wealth into company and gravely unpacks it. His riches are always about him.  
65 He never stoops to catch a glittering something in your presence to share it with you, before he quite knows whether it be true touch or not. You cannot cry *halves* to anything that he finds. He does not find, but bring. You never witness his first apprehension of a thing. His understanding is always at its meridian—you never see the first dawn or the early streaks.—He has no falterings of self-suspicion. Surmises, guesses, misgivings, half-intuitions, semi-consciousnesses, partial illuminations, dim instincts, embryo conceptions, have no place in his brain or vocabulary. The twilight of  
75 dubiety never falls upon him. Is he orthodox—he has no doubts. Is he an infidel—he has none either. Between the affirmative and the negative there is no border-land with him. You cannot hover with him upon the confines of truth or wander in the maze of a probable argument. He always  
80 keeps the path. You cannot make excursions with him—

for he sets you right. His taste never fluctuates. His morality never abates. He cannot compromise, or understand middle actions. There can be but a right and a wrong. His conversation is as a book. His affirmations have the sanctity of an oath. You must speak upon the square with 85 him. He stops a metaphor like a suspected person in an enemy's country. "A healthy book!" said one of his countrymen to me, who had ventured to give that appellation to John Bunce,— "did I catch rightly what you said? I have heard of a man in health, and of a healthy state of body, but 90 I do not see how that epithet can be properly applied to a book." Above all, you must beware of indirect expressions before a Caledonian. Clap an extinguisher upon your irony, if you are unhappily blessed with a vein of it. Remember you are upon your oath. I have a print of a graceful female 95 after Leonardo da Vinci, which I was showing off to Mr. ——. After he had examined it minutely, I ventured to ask him how he liked MY BEAUTY (a foolish name it goes by among my friends)—when he very gravely assured me, that "he had considerable respect for my character and talents" (so 100 he was pleased to say), "but had not given himself much thought about the degree of my personal pretensions." The misconception staggered me, but did not seem much to disconcert him. Persons of this nation are particularly fond of affirming a truth—which nobody doubts. They do not so 105 properly affirm, as announce it. They do indeed appear to have such a love of truth (as if, like virtue, it were valuable for itself) that all truth becomes equally valuable, whether the proposition that contains it be new or old, disputed, or such as is impossible to become a subject of disputation. I 110 was present, not long since, at a party of North Britons, where a son of Burns was expected; and happened to drop a silly expression (in my South British way), that I wished it were the father instead of the son—when four of them started up at once to inform me that "that was impossible, because 115 he was dead." An impracticable wish, it seems, was more than they could conceive. Swift has hit off this part of their character, namely their love of truth, in his biting way,



but with an illiberality that necessarily confines the passage  
 120 to the margin.\* The tediousness of these people is certainly  
 provoking. I wonder if they ever tire one another?—In my  
 early life I had a passionate fondness for the poetry of Burns.  
 I have sometimes foolishly hoped to ingratiate myself with  
 his countrymen by expressing it. But I have always found  
 125 that a true Scot resents your admiration of his compatriot,  
 even more than he would your contempt of him. The latter  
 he imputes to your “imperfect acquaintance with many of  
 the words which he uses”; and the same objection makes it  
 a presumption in you to suppose that you can admire him.—  
 130 Thomson they seem to have forgotten. Smollett they have  
 neither forgotten nor forgiven, for his delineation of Rory  
 and his companion, upon their first introduction to our  
 metropolis.—Speak of Smollett as a great genius, and they  
 will retort upon you Hume’s History compared with *his*  
 135 Continuation of it. What if the historian had continued  
 Humphrey Clinker?

I have, in the abstract, no disrespect for Jews. They  
 are a piece of stubborn antiquity, compared with which  
 Stonehenge is in its nonage. They date beyond the pyra-  
 140 mids. But I should not care to be in habits of familiar  
 intercourse with any of that nation. I confess that I have  
 not the nerves to enter their synagogues. Old prejudices  
 cling about me. I cannot shake off the story of Hugh of  
 Lincoln. Centuries of injury, contempt, and hate, on the  
 145 one side,—of cloaked revenge, dissimulation, and hate, on  
 the other, between our and their fathers, must and ought, to  
 affect the blood of the children. I cannot believe it can  
 run clear and kindly yet; or that a few fine words, such

\* There are some people who think they sufficiently acquit themselves, and entertain their company, with relating facts of no consequence, not at all out of the road of such common incidents as happen every day; and this I have observed more frequently among the Scots than any other nation, who are very careful not to omit the minutest circumstances of time or place; which kind of discourse, if it were not a little relieved by the uncouth terms and phrases, as well as accent and gesture peculiar to that country, would be hardly tolerable.—  
*Hints towards an Essay on Conversation.*



as candour, liberality, the light of a nineteenth century, can close up the breaches of so deadly a disunion. A Hebrew is 150 nowhere congenial to me. He is least distasteful on 'Change—for the mercantile spirit levels all distinctions, as all are beauties in the dark. I boldly confess that I do not relish the approximation of Jew and Christian, which has become so fashionable. The reciprocal endearments have, to me, 155 something hypocritical and unnatural in them. I do not like to see the Church and Synagogue kissing and congeeing in awkward postures of an affected civility. If *they* are converted, why do they not come over to us altogether? Why keep up a form of separation, when the life of it is 160 fled? If they can sit with us at table, why do they keck at our cookery? I do not understand these half-convertites. Jews christianizing—Christians judaizing—puzzle me. I like fish or flesh. A moderate Jew is a more confounding piece of anomaly than a wet Quaker. The spirit of the 165 synagogue is essentially *separative*. B—— would have been more in keeping if he had abided by the faith of his forefathers. There is a fine scorn in his face, which nature meant to be of — Christians. The Hebrew spirit is strong in him, in spite of his proselytism. He cannot conquer the 170 Shibboleth. How it breaks out when he sings, "The Children of Israel passed through the Red Sea!" The auditors, for the moment, are as Egyptians to him, and he rides over our necks in triumph. There is no mistaking him. B—— has a strong expression of sense in his counte- 175 nance, and it is confirmed by his singing. The foundation of his vocal excellence is sense. He sings with understanding, as Kemble delivered dialogue. He would sing the Commandments, and give an appropriate character to each prohibition. His nation, in general, have not over-sensible countenances. 180 How should they?—but you seldom see a silly expression among them. Gain, and the pursuit of gain, sharpen a man's visage. I never heard of an idiot being born among them.—Some admire the Jewish female-physiognomy. I admire it—but with trembling. Jael had those full dark 185 inscrutable eyes.

In the Negro countenance you will often meet with strong traits of benignity. I have felt yearnings of tenderness towards some of these faces—or rather masks—that have  
 190 looked out kindly upon one in casual encounters in the streets and highways. I love what Fuller beautifully calls—these “images of God cut in ebony.” But I should not like to associate with them, to share my meals and my good nights with them—because they are black.

195 I love Quaker ways, and Quaker worship. I venerate the Quaker principles. It does me good for the rest of the day when I meet any of their people in my path. When I am ruffled or disturbed by any occurrence, the sight, or quiet voice of a Quaker, acts upon me as a ventilator, lightening  
 200 the air, and taking off a load from the bosom. But I cannot like the Quakers (as Desdemona would say) “to live with them.” I am all over sophisticated—with humours, fancies, craving hourly sympathy. I must have books, pictures, theatres, chit-chat, scandal, jokes, ambiguities, and a thousand  
 205 whimwhams, which their simpler taste can do without. I should starve at their primitive banquet. My appetites are too high for the salads which (according to Evelyn) Eve dressed for the angel; my gusto too excited

To sit a guest with Daniel at his pulse.

210 The indirect answers which Quakers are often found to return to a question put to them may be explained, I think, without the vulgar assumption, that they are more given to evasion and equivocating than other people. They naturally look to their words more carefully, and are more cautious of  
 215 committing themselves. They have a peculiar character to keep up on this head. They stand in a manner upon their veracity. A Quaker is by law exempted from taking an oath. The custom of resorting to an oath in extreme cases, sanctified as it is by all religious antiquity, is apt (it must be  
 220 confessed) to introduce into the laxer sort of minds the notion of two kinds of truth—the one applicable to the solemn affairs of justice, and the other to the common proceedings of daily intercourse. As truth bound upon the conscience by

an oath can be but truth, so in the common affirmations of  
 the shop and the market-place a latitude is expected, and 225  
 conceded, upon questions wanting this solemn covenant.  
 Something less than truth satisfies. It is common to hear  
 a person say, "You do not expect me to speak as if I were  
 upon my oath." Hence a great deal of incorrectness and  
 inadvertency, short of falsehood, creeps into ordinary con- 230  
 versation; and a kind of secondary or laic-truth is tolerated,  
 where clergy-truth—oath-truth, by the nature of the circum-  
 stances, is not required. A Quaker knows none of this  
 distinction. His simple affirmation being received, upon  
 the most sacred occasions, without any further test, stamps 235  
 its value upon the words which he is to use upon the most  
 indifferent topics of life. He looks to them, naturally, with  
 more severity. You can have of him no more than his word.  
 He knows, if he is caught tripping in a casual expression, he  
 forfeits, for himself at least, his claim to the invidious 240  
 exemption. He knows that his syllables are weighed—and  
 how far a consciousness of this particular watchfulness,  
 exerted against a person, has a tendency to produce indirect  
 answers, and a diverting of the question by honest means,  
 might be illustrated, and the practice justified, by a more 245  
 sacred example than is proper to be adduced upon this  
 occasion. The admirable presence of mind, which is notorious  
 in Quakers upon all contingencies, might be traced to this  
 imposed self-watchfulness—if it did not seem rather an  
 humble and secular scion of that old stock of religious 250  
 constancy, which never bent or faltered, in the Primitive  
 Friends, or gave way to the winds of persecution, to the  
 violence of judge or accuser, under trials and racking  
 examinations. "You will never be the wiser, if I sit here  
 answering your questions till midnight," said one of those 255  
 upright Justicers to Penn, who had been putting law-cases  
 with a puzzling subtlety. "Thereafter as the answers may  
 be," retorted the Quaker. The astonishing composure of this  
 people is sometimes ludicrously displayed in lighter instances.  
 —I was travelling in a stage-coach with three male Quakers, 260  
 buttoned up in the straitest nonconformity of their sect.

We stopped to bait at Andover, where a meal, partly tea apparatus, partly supper, was set before us. My friends confined themselves to the tea-table. I in my way took  
265 supper. When the landlady brought in the bill, the eldest of my companions discovered that she had charged for both meals. This was resisted. Mine hostess was very clamorous and positive. Some mild arguments were used on the part of the Quakers, for which the heated mind of the good lady  
270 seemed by no means a fit recipient. The guard came in with his usual peremptory notice. The Quakers pulled out their money and formally tendered it—so much for tea—I, in humble imitation, tendering mine—for the supper which I had taken. She would not relax in her demand. So they  
275 all three quietly put up their silver, as did myself, and marched out of the room, the eldest and gravest going first, with myself closing up the rear, who thought I could not do better than follow the example of such grave and warrantable personages. We got in. The steps went up. The coach  
280 drove off. The murmurs of mine hostess, not very indistinctly or ambiguously pronounced, became after a time inaudible—and now my conscience, which the whimsical scene had for a while suspended, beginning to give some twitches, I waited, in the hope that some justification would be offered  
285 by these serious persons for the seeming injustice of their conduct. To my great surprise, not a syllable was dropped on the subject. They sat as mute as at a meeting. At length the eldest of them broke silence, by inquiring of his next neighbour, “Hast thee heard how indigos go at the  
290 India House?” and the question operated as a soporific on my moral feeling as far as Exeter.

## NOTES

*Note.*—The Letters are quoted by the numbering in Ainger's edition, 2 vols. 1888.

### CHRIST'S HOSPITAL FIVE-AND-THIRTY YEARS AGO.

1 Lamb's "Works" were published in two small volumes, 1818. "You will smile," he says to Coleridge in the Dedication, "to see the slender labors of your friend designated by the title of *Works*." The volumes contain Poems, a Tragedy, the tale of Rosamund Gray, and various Essays, besides the Recollections of Christ's Hospital. The present Essay, written under the assumed name of "Elia," pretends to be a criticism by another hand of the former work.

In another later paper, called "A Character of the late Elia by a Friend," Lamb tells us how the author in this essay "Under the *first person* (his favourite figure) shadows forth the forlorn estate of a country boy placed at a London school, far from his friends and connections—in direct opposition to his own early history." (See p. 88.) In fact he twines his own story with that of his friend S. T. Coleridge, and yet at the end of the essay speaks of the real Coleridge as another person. Coleridge was born at Ottery St. Mary, in Devonshire, but lived for a while at "Sweet Calne in Wiltshire." The names indicated by initials are known from a key written by Lamb himself, but are only interesting in connexion with Lamb's biography.

19 'piggin,' a small wooden vessel.

25 'banyan-days.' Smollett's *Roderick Random*, xxv.: "I expressed a curiosity to know the meaning of banyan-day. They told me that on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays the ship's company had no allowance of meat, and that these meagre days were called banyan-days, the reason of which they did not know; but I have since learned they take their denomination from a set of devotees in some parts of the East-Indies, who never taste flesh." Banian is an old name for a Hindoo.

96 'L.'s governor.' The allusion is to Samuel Salt, with whom Lamb's father lived as clerk. See the Essay on *The Old Benchers of the Inner Temple*.

130 'Caligula's minion.' The emperor Caligula made his horse a consul.

155 'to feed,' &c. Virgil, *Æneid*, i. 464, "animus pictura pascit inani."

163 'Tis said he ate,' &c. Half quoted from *Antony and Cleopatra*, i. 4.

242 'watchet' is pale blue. Milton, *Hist. of Muscovia*: "The mariners all appeared in watchet, or sky-coloured cloth." So "watchet eyes."

268 'San Benito,' a short linen dress, with demons painted on it, worn by persons condemned by the Spanish Inquisition.

293 'like a drucer.' Shakespeare, *Antony and Cleopatra*, iii. 11, 37.

304 'Insolent Greece.' Quoted from Ben Jonson's lines on Shakespeare.

314 'Rousseau' and 'John Locke,' though with very different aims, both taught that education should follow the natural disposition of a child.

337 'the Samite,' Pythagoras.

353 'Ululantes,' 'Tartarus.' The allusion appears to be to Virgil, *Aen.* vi. 548 foll.

356 'scannel pipes.' Milton, *Lycidas*, l. 124.

358 'Flaccus,' quibble about *Rex*, etc. See Hor. *Sat.* 1, 7, 35; Terence, *And.* 5, 2, 16, *Adelp.* 3, 3, 74.

364 'caxon,' a wig.

378 'piecing out,' &c. "Piece out our imperfections with your thoughts." Shakespeare, *Henry V.* prol. 23.

434 'Regni novitas,' Virg. *Aen.* 1. 563.

445 "Finding some of Stuart's race  
Unhappy, pass their Annals by."

M. PRIOR, *Carmen Seculare* for 1700.

453 'Mirandola,' Pico della Mirandola, Italian philosopher and poet (1463-1494), an ardent student of Plato. 'Jamblichus' and 'Plotinus,' Alexandrian philosophers of the 3rd and 4th century after Christ, called Neo-Platonists.

458 'Grey Friars.' Christ's Hospital stands upon the site of a convent of the Grey Friars. The site was given by Henry VIII., and the school founded by Edward VI.

459 'wit-combats,' the original is from Fuller's *Worthies*, where Ben Jonson is the Spanish galleon, Shakespeare the English man-of-war.

485 'sizars.' See *Oxford in the Vacation*, l. 80.

#### MY RELATIONS.

In this Essay Lamb draws portraits of his aunt, and his brother, John Lamb. He touches upon their foibles, and even upon graver faults of character, with the tender irony that veils affection.

4 'Browne.' Sir Thomas Browne, author of *Religio Medici*, was one of Lamb's favourite authors. He boasts, in the *Two Races of Men*, that he was the first of moderns to discover the beauties of the *Urn Burial*.

29 'chapel in Essex Street,' a Unitarian chapel. Essex Street runs out of the Strand.

48 Charles Lamb had a brother and a sister, John and Mary. These he here calls his 'cousins' James and Bridget. He also had a sister Elizabeth, who died in infancy.

60 'grand climacteric,' every 7th, or 9th, or the 63rd year of a man's life was supposed to be 'climacterical,' or specially dangerous, but the last most.

64 'pen of Yorick.' One of the characters in Sterne's *Tristram Shandy* is the parson Yorick, who is also the supposed traveller in the *Sentimental Journey*. Sterne took the name from the clown-scene in *Hamlet*.

71 'phlegm,' indifference.

72 'temperament,' natural disposition.

90 'Domenichino.' Domenico Zampieri, a Bolognese painter (1581-1641).

96 'Charles of Sweden,' known as Charles the Twelfth.

97 'upon instinct.' See Shakespeare, 1 *Henry IV.* ii. 4, 300.

118 'thus sitting.' *Par. Lost*, ii. 164.

138 'lungs shall crow.' Shakespeare, *As You Like It*, ii. 7, 30.

153 'Claude' Lorraine was a French, 'Hobbina' a Dutch, landscape painter. 'Christie's and Phillips's,' art auction-rooms.

174 'his Cynthia of the minute.' Pope, *Moral Essays*, ep. ii. 19: he "choose a firm cloud, before it fall, and in it catch, ere she change, the Cynthia of this minute."

179 'Carracci.' There were three painters of this name. The meaning is that as James Elia grew less enchanted with his picture, he assigned it to less and less noted artists.

214 'all for pity he could die.' Compare Shakespeare, *Lear*, iv. 7.

216 'Thomas Clarkson,' associated with William Wilberforce in the abolition of the slave trade. The phrase, "True yoke-fellow with Time," is from Wordsworth's sonnet to Clarkson, written 1807.

226 'he thinks of relieving.' An echo from Goldsmith's sketch of Burke in the *Retaliation*: "And thought of convincing while they thought of dining." So in the next sentence there is perhaps an echo from Johnson's line about Shakespeare: "And panting Time toiled after him in vain." Elia is full of such.

#### MACKERY END IN HERTFORDSHIRE.

1 'Bridget Elia' is Charles Lamb's sister Mary.

7 'the rash King,' Jephthah.

9 'with a difference.' Ophelia in *Hamlet*, iv. 5, 182: "O you must wear your rue with a difference."

16 'Burton,' author of the *Anatomy of Melancholy*. The *Religio Medici* is the work of Sir Thomas Browne. 'Margaret Duchess of Newcastle' lived in the time of the Commonwealth, and wrote, besides poems, a life of her husband—"a jewel," so Lamb held, "for which no casket was rich enough."

64 'stuff o' the conscience.' *Othello*, i. 2.

123 'but thou.' Wordsworth, *Yarrow Visited*, st. 6.

161 'scriptural cousins.' *St. Luke* i. 40.

166 B.F. = Barron Field, a barrister, who after this incident went to Australia as a judge. The Essay, *Distant Correspondents*, is cast in the form of a letter to him.

### BLAKESMOOR IN H—SHIRE.

In illustration of this visit to Blakesware (the real *Blakesmoor*) see Letter ccxviii. : "You have well described your old-fashioned grand paternal hall. Is it not odd that every one's earliest recollections are of some such place? I had my Blakesware (Blakesmoor in the *London*). Nothing fills a child's mind like a large old mansion." And Letter xlv. (to Southey): "I have but just got your letter, being returned from Herts, where I have passed a few red-letter days with much pleasure. I would describe the county to you, as you have done by Devonshire; but, alas! I am a poor pen at that same. I could tell you of an old house with a tapestry bedroom, the 'Judgment of Solomon' composing one panel, and 'Actæon spying Diana naked' the other. I could tell of an old marble hall, with Hogarth's prints, and the Roman Cæsars in marble hung round. I could tell of a *wilderness*, and of a village church, and where the bones of my honoured grandam lie; but there are feelings which refuse to be translated, sulky aborigines, which will not be naturalised in another soil. Of this nature are old family faces and scenes of infancy."

46 'Cowley' himself in the Essay *Myself* describes how as a child he sat in his mother's parlour and read Spenser.

58 'Actæon' beheld Diana bathing. He was changed to a stag and torn in pieces by his dogs. In art he is represented with sprouting horns.

61 'Marsyas'—so ran the old horrible legend—was skinned alive by Phœbus for venturing to rival him in music.

92 'garden-loving poet,' Andrew Marvell. The lines occur in *Appleton House*, a description of the seat of the Lord Fairfax, in Yorkshire.

114 'coatless,' without a coat of arms.

124 'capitulatory,' that sum up or recapitulate their achievements.

143 'Damocetas,' 'Ægon.' See *Virg. Ecl.* ii. 1.

167 'Alice,' alluded to also in the Essay *Dream Children*, Lamb's early love; a personality, like Wordsworth's Lucy, living for us only in the shadowy recollections of the author.



*THE OLD BENCHERS OF THE INNER TEMPLE.*

A good deal of this essay is true to fact. Lamb's father, here figured under the name of Lovel, was actually clerk to Samuel Salt, a Bencher of the Temple.

7 'Spenser,' the lines are from the *Prothalamium*, st. 8.

20 'goodly pile,' called 'Paper Buildings.'

27 'Twickenham,' higher up the river, above the dirtier waters of the town, where river-nymphs might be imagined dwelling.

43 'Ah! yet doth beauty.' Shakespeare, *Sonnets*, 104.

59 'carved it out quaintly.' In 3 *Henry VI.*, ii. 5, 24, the King longs to be a homely swain and "carve out dials quaintly, point by point."

62 'Marvell.' The whole poem will be found in the *Golden Treasury of English Lyrics*, No. cxi.

76 'meanwhile the mind,' &c. The sense is: From the lesser pleasures of the outward eye the mind retires into the higher pleasures of inward contemplation, imagining more perfect visions than those the eye sees; counting all the visible world as nothing beside the freshness of original thought.

196 'Miss Blandy' was a lady who was hanged in 1752 for poisoning her father at the instigation of her lover.

256 'his flapper.' Swift, *Gulliver's Travels, Voyage to Laputa*, ii.: "The minds of these people are so taken up with intense speculations that they can neither speak nor attend to the discourses of others without being roused, for which reason those persons who are able to afford it always keep a flapper in their family; and the business of this officer is gently to strike with his bladder the mouth of him who is to speak, and the right ear of him or them to whom the speaker addresseth himself."

289 'a remnant most forlorn.' From one of Lamb's own poems on his aunt's funeral.

"One parent yet is left—a wretched thing,  
A sad survivor of his buried wife,  
A palsy-smitten, childish, old, old man,  
A semblance most forlorn of what he was."

292 'Bayes,' the leading character in Buckingham's *Rehearsal*, a satire on the tragedies of Dryden and his contemporaries, which has not yet lost its charm. The character of Bayes was meant mainly for a caricature of Dryden himself: Dryden took his revenge in the famous lines on *Zimri*.

381 'old men covered.' See the Essay on *Witches*: "The picture of the Witch raising up Samuel—O! that old man covered with a mantle!"

391 'reducing,' in the unusual sense of 'bringing back'; so 'reductive,' l. 431.

410 'sub-treasurer.' Randal Norris was sub-treasurer of the Inner Temple.

422 'green and vigorous senility.' "Cruda deo viridisque senectus." Virg. *Aen.* vi. 304.

423 'Ye yourselves are old.' See Lear's appeal to the heavens against his daughters, ii. 7, 194.

### OXFORD IN THE VACATION.

This Essay was the second written for the *London Magazine* over the signature "Elia"; the first describes the clerks of the old South Sea House.

5 'Vivares,' 'Woollet,' engravers of the 18th century.

11 'notched and cropt scrivener.' A 'cropt scrivener' (attorney or money-lender) is a phrase of Ben Jonson, alluding to the close-cut hair of the professional man. Lamb's added epithet 'notched' seems borrowed from his quill or his desk, unless it refers to the 'notches' or tallies by which the old scrivener kept his accounts.

14 'agnize,' acknowledge. Shakespeare, *Othello*, i. 3, 232.

43 'Andrew.' The original line is "Andrew and Simon, famous after known." *Paradise Regained*, ii. 7.

46 'Baskett,' king's printer, possessing patent for printing Bibles, issued editions with prints from 1712 onwards.

48 'Spagnoletti.' Ribera lo Spagnoletto (1588-1656) painted a "Martyrdom of St. Bartholomew," now in Madrid.

56 'far off their coming shone.' Adapted from *Paradise Lost*, vi. 768.

70 'Bodley.' Sir Thomas Bodley founded the great library known by his name at Oxford.

78 'admitted ad eundem,' that is, a degree occasionally granted without residence.

80 'sizar,' 'servitor,' 'gentleman commoner.' The first two were originally paid scholars who had certain menial duties to perform; the names still remain, though the duties are abolished. A gentleman commoner was one who paid higher fees and had special privileges,

116 'palpable obscure.' *Paradise Lost*, ii. 406.

125 'dormitory,' resting-place, a *middle-state* between this life and the next.

134 'Herculanean raker.' A number of charred papyrus rolls were discovered in a library at Herculaneum. So Wordsworth :

"O ye who patiently explore  
The wreck of Herculanean lore,  
What rapture could ye seize  
Some Theban fragment, or unroll  
One precious, tender hearted scroll  
Of pure Simonides !"

'credit of the three witnesses.' Alluding to the disputed verse, 1 *John* v. 7 : "There are three that bear record in heaven," &c.

136 'Porson,' the famous Greek scholar and classical editor (1759-1808).

'G. D.' From Lamb's letters we get many amusing pictures of his good-natured, short-sighted, pedantic friend George Dyer : "God never put a kinder heart into flesh of man than George Dyer's !" "O George ! George ! with a head uniformly wrong and a heart uniformly right !" "George Dyer is the only literary character I am happily acquainted with. The oftener I see him, the more deeply I admire him. He is goodness itself. If I could but calculate the precise date of his death, I would write a novel on purpose to make George the hero. I could hit him off to a hair." Lamb did make him the hero of an essay, the *Amicus Redivivus* of the last essays.

141 'tall Scapula.' A tall copy is one not cut down in the binding. Scapula pirated Stephen's *Thesaurus Linguae Graecæ* in 1530.

149 'a calm and sinless life,' occurs in the Dedication to Wordsworth's *White Doe*. Lamb's phrase may be an adaptation of this.

188 'Queen Lar,' a domestic goddess.

196 'Sosia,' a slave in Plautus' *Amphitryon*, is confounded by his own "double," the god Mercury in disguise.

205 'co-sphered with Plato.' Milton, *Il Penseroso* :

"Where oft I may outwatch the Bear  
With thrice-great Hermes, or unsphere  
The spirit of Plato."

206 'Harrington,' author of *Oceana*.

226 'Agur's wish,' *Proverbs* xxx, 10.

257 'Delectable Mountains.' In Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*.

## THE OLD MARGATE HOY.

A hoy is a one-decked, one-masted, cutter-rigged vessel.

26 'chimera,' put for any fire-breathing monster. The "fire-god parching up Scamander" was Hephaestus. *Iliad*, xxi. 342, foll.

43 'Ariel.' "Now in the waist, the deck, in every cabin, I flamed amazement." Shakespeare, *Tempest*, i. 2. 198.

107 'ignorant present.' *Macbeth*, i. 5, 58.

110 'the Colossus at Rhodes' was a gigantic statue of the Sun-God near the mouth of the harbour. That it straddled across the harbour was a pure legend. It was destroyed soon after its erection by an earthquake.

125 'the Reculvers,' twin towers belonging to an old monastic church, now ruined, on the north coast of Kent, near Herne Bay, subsequently used as beacon-towers.

190 'for many a day.' Thomson's *Seasons*, "Summer," l. 1002.

192 'still-vexed Bermoothes.' Shakespeare, *Tempest*, i. 2, 229.

196 'be but as buggs.' Spenser, *Faerie Queen*, ii. 12, 25. The original has 'fearen' for 'frighten'; 'buggs' = bugbears, terrors; 'entrall' = depths, bowels. The whole passage in Spenser is a collection of quaint sea-monsters. 'Juan Fernandez' is the island on which lived Alexander Selkirk, the original of Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*.

214 'poem of Gebir,' by Lamb's contemporary, W. S. Landor (fifth book). In his letters (No. xlv.) Lamb expresses himself somewhat contemptuously: "I have seen 'Gebor!' 'Gebor' aptly so denominated from geborish, *quasi* gibberish. But 'Gebor' hath some lucid intervals."

222 'inland murmurs.' An echo from Wordsworth, *Lines Written above Tintern Abbey*, l. 4.

237 'Meshech.' *Psalms* cxx. 5.

251 'run,' cant term for contraband.

262 'a book to read strange matters,' quoted from *Macbeth*, i. v.

291 'The daughters of Cheapside,' in the original "the beauties of the Cheap." The author is one of Lamb's loved Elizabethans, Thomas Randolph, one of the "tribe of Ben" or "sons" of Ben Jonson.

## THE SUPERANNUATED MAN.

This Essay appeared in the *London Magazine* for May, 1825, and Lamb had actually received a pension from the directors of the India House in the preceding March. For the directors he substitutes an imaginary firm of merchants.

143 'that's born.' From Thomas Middleton, an Elizabethan dramatist (d. 1627). Some of his plays have been published in the "Mermaid Series." See also Lamb's *Specimens*.

167 'Sir Robert Howard' was Dryden's brother-in-law, and collaborated with him in the *Indian Queen* (1664). He is one of the imaginary speakers in Dryden's celebrated dialogue *On Dramatic Poesy* (1667).

216 'Carthusian.' An order of monks originally emanating from the solitude of La Chartreuse. The name in England was corrupted into Charterhouse.

250 'huge cantle,' a large slice or corner. See 1 *Henry IV.*, iii. 1, 100.

255 'Lucretian pleasure.' Alluding to the common quotation from *Lucretius*, ii. 1.: "Suave mari magno," &c. See Bacon, *Essay i.*, "On Truth," *Adv. of Learning*, i. 8, 5.

266 'as low as to the fiends.' *Hamlet*, ii. 2, 519 (of Fortune's wheel)— "Bowl the round nave down the hill of heaven,  
As low as to the fiends."

275 'opera.' The pun (it may be explained for non-classical readers) lies in the second sense of *opera*, works, plural of *opus*, work.

### DREAM-CHILDREN: A REVERIE.

This, the most touching of Lamb's personal utterances, was written a short while after the death of his brother, John Lamb, the 'James Elia' of the *Essays*. Charles Lamb was then left alone with his sister Mary. His grandmother, Mary Field, had been housekeeper at Blakesware, the 'Blakesmoor' of the *Essay* already given. Biographers have sought to identify 'the fair Alice W——n,' but for us she is simply Lamb's dream-wife, as the second Alice is his dream-child.

### A CHARACTER OF THE LATE ELIA.

BY A FRIEND.

This *Essay* appeared in the *London Magazine* (1823). Part of it was republished in 1833 as a Preface to the *Last Essays of Elia*.

9 'T. and H.,' Taylor and Heney, publishers of the *London Magazine*.

11 'Janus,' the signature of Wainwright, a contributor to the *London Magazine*.

12 'P——r,' Bryan Waller Procter, known as "Barry Cornwall," author of *English Songs* (1832), and a *Memoir of Charles Lamb* (1866).

13 'Allan C.,' Allan Cunningham, a Scotch writer, one of the contributors to the *London Magazine*. He was the author of *Lives of British Painters*, and a *Life of Sir David Wilkie*; among his songs the best known is that beginning "A wet sheet and a flowing sea."

13 'nobly forgetful' because Elia, in the Essay *Imperfect Sympathies*, declares, "I have been trying all my life to like Scotchmen, and am obliged to desist from the experiment in despair."

159 'facetious Bishop Corbet,' Richard Corbet (1582-1635), bishop of Oxford and Norwich, author of *Farewell to the Fairies* and other light miscellany verse. See Chambers' *Cyclopadia of English Literature*, i. 238, for specimens.

159 'Hoole.' In Letter xx. Lamb says, "Fairfax [the Elizabethan translator of Tasso] I have been in quest of a long time. Johnson, in his *Life of Waller*, gives a most delicious specimen of him, and adds, in the true manner of that delicate critic, as well as amiable man, 'It may be presumed that this old version will not be much read after the elegant translation of my friend Mr. Hoole.' I endeavoured—I wished to gain some idea of Tasso from this Mr. Hoole, the great boast and ornament of the India House, but soon desisted. I found him more vapid than smallest small beer 'sun-vinegared.'" Later he writes, "By the way, I have hit upon Fairfax's *Godfrey of Bullen* for half-a-crown. Rejoice with me." (Letter xxv.)

160 'assoil,' absolve. Lamb greatly admired Izaak Walton's *Compleat Angler*. "It would sweeten a man's temper at any time to read it." (Letter xii.)

178 'weaved-up follies.' "Must I ravel out my weaved-up folly?" Shakespeare, *Richard II.* iv. 1, 228.

### IMPERFECT SYMPATHIES.

1 'Author of the *Religio Medici*,' Sir Thomas Browne (1605-1682) appealed to Lamb by the stateliness of his style, by his large toleration, his "general and indifferent temper," and by the quaint fancies, the "beautiful obliquities" of his brain. See Essay *Mackery End*. The quoted passage will be found in *Religio Medici*, part 2 sec. i. Below (sec. iv.) Browne reproves another "offence unto charity," of branding whole nations by opprobrious epithets, when "by a word we wound a thousand, and at one blow assassin the honour of a nation."

3 'notional and conjectural essences.' For Browne's speculations about the world of spirits ("notional essences" = beings of fancy's creation) see in particular *Religio Medici*, part 1 sec. xxxiii. : "Therefore, for spirits, I am so far from denying their existence, that I could easily believe, that not only whole countries, but particular persons, have their tutelary and guardian angels." He discusses their probable natures, and confesses "there is not any creature that hath so near a glimpse of their nature as light in the sun and elements—we style it a bare accident, but where it subsists alone, 't is a spiritual substance, and may be an angel—in brief, conceive light invisible, and that is a spirit."

"These spirits," he says, "are the magisterial and masterpiece of the Creator, the flower, or, as we may say, the best part of nothing; actually existing, what we are but in hopes, and probability." These last words were doubtless in Lamb's thought when he said that in Browne's categories (classes) of being, "the possible took the upper hand of the actual." Browne's mysticism was the fruit of a love of paradox: "I love to lose myself in a mystery, to pursue my reason to an *O altitudo*." (Part I sec. ix.) See what he says on Dreams. (Part 2 sec. xi.) Another Essay which Browne seemingly inspired by repulsion, is that on *New Year's Eve*.

5 'concretions,' realities, as opposed to the notional essences.

11 'standing on earth.' "Standing on earth, not rapt above the pole," a line from Milton's invocation of Urania (*Paradise Lost*, vii. 23) to "descend from Heaven" to sing the things of earth.

'Heywood.' (*Footnote*.) Thomas Heywood, a prolific Elizabethan dramatist, described by Lamb (in the *Specimens*) as "a sort of prose Shakespeare." He also wrote various poems (as the one from which Lamb quotes) and songs, the best of which is "Pack, clouds, away, and welcome day."

45 'polar.' For illustration see Shakespeare, *Julius Cæsar*, iii. 1:  
 "But I am constant as the northern star,  
 Of whose true-fix'd and resting quality  
 There is no fellow in the firmament."

58 'his Minerva.' Alluding to the well-known Greek legend of Pallas Athena springing fully armed from the head of Zeus.

67 'true touch.' Touch is (1) a stone to try the quality of metals; (2) the trial, as "Ten thousand men must bide the *touch*" (Shakespeare, *Henry IV.*); (3) the tried metal, proved quality, as here, and "My friends of *noble touch*." (Shakespeare, *Coriolanus*, iv. 1.)

89 'John Bunclé.' A fictitious autobiography written by Thomas Amory (1691-1788). This was one of the "oddities of authorship" that Lamb relished. In the *Two Races of Men* he tells how, "in yonder nook, John Bunclé, a widower-volume, with eyes closed, mourns his ravished mate"; meaning that some borrower had carried off a volume. The actual John Bunclé is made to marry seven wives one after another, but to hold it wrong to mourn overmuch for the dead.

96 'Leonardo da Vinci.' The print was from the *Vierge aux Rochers*, the "Virgin of the Rocks" of Leonardo (1452-1519), of which there are two variations, one in the National Gallery of London, and one in the Louvre at Paris. Lamb has some lines upon the picture, remarkable as showing how the great *Ode* of Wordsworth was then ringing in his ears.

130 'Thomson,' 'Smollett,' 'Hume.' James Thomson (1700-1748), author of the *Seasons*, though born in Scotland, shows no trace of it in

his work. Tobias Smollett (1721-1771, born near Dumbarton) wrote *Roderick Random* (1748); this Roderick is the Scotch "Rory," who, with his school-fellow and fellow-countryman Strap, is most egregiously gulled by the southerners on their first coming to London. *Humphrey Clinker* is another novel of Smollett's, told in a series of letters. Smollett did not continue Hume's *History*, but wrote an independent history, a part of which publishers have been accustomed to print as a "continuation" of Hume, who only carried his work to the Revolution.

143 'Hugh of Lincoln.' Matthew Paris tells the tale how the Jews of Lincoln tortured and murdered a little Christian boy named Hugh. There are several old ballads on the subject. See Percy's *Reliques* and Golden Treasury *Ballad Book*, No. xliii., where it is a Jew's daughter who wiles away the "bonny boy," and throws the body into a well, "was fifty fathom deep," where the Lady Helen, his mother, finds it. Hugh is mentioned at the end of Chaucer's *Prioresses Tale*, the legend of a similar murder done on another little child for singing *Alma Redemptoris* through the Jewry, or Jew's quarter.

166 'B——.' John Braham (1774-1856) the most famous singer of his day, author of several songs, including the widely-popular *Death o Nelson*. He used to sing in many of Handel's oratorios.

178 'Kemble.' (1757-1823.) The great actor who carried on the work of Garrick in interpreting Shakespeare. His sister Sarah became the celebrated Mrs. Siddons.

195 'Quaker ways.' Side by side with this stands the Essay *A Quaker's Meeting*. Lamb had strong sympathy with the Quakers, and used to borrow books by Quaker writers from his Quaker friend Bernard Barton. In Letter xcii. he writes to him, "Do 'Friends' allow puns—*verbal* equivocations? They are unjustly accused of it, and I did my little best in the 'Imperfect Sympathies' to vindicate them."

201 'to live with them.' "That I did love the Moor to live with him," &c. *Othello*, I, iii., 249.

209 'to sit a guest.'

"Sometimes that with Elijah he partook  
Or as a guest with Daniel at his pulse."

MILTON, *Paradise Regained*, ii. 277, 8.

250 'scion,' in its proper sense of sucker, sapling.

256 'Penn,' founder of Pennsylvania, author of *No Cross No Crown*. In an early letter to Coleridge (No. xxiii.) Lamb says, "I have had thoughts of turning Quaker, and have been reading a most capital book, good thoughts in good language, William Penn's *No Cross No Crown*. I like it immensely."



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